Shadows, struggles and poetic guilt: Glyn Jones, his literary doubles and the Welsh-language tradition.

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Shadows, Struggles and Poetic Guilt:

Glyn Jones, his Literary Doubles and the Welsh-Language Tradition

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Summary

Shadows, Struggles and Poetic Guilt: Glyn Jones, his Literary Doubles and the Welsh-Language Tradition

An 'Anglo Welsh' writer who emerged in the 1930s to considerable acclaim in Wales and London, Glyn Jones was a contemporary and friend of Dylan Thomas. An innovative Welsh Modernist, he found the genres of poetry and the short story best suited to the exhibition of his concise, imagist and often grotesque experimentalism. Unlike Thomas, he wrote two novels, was a 'gentle' satirist of Welsh culture, and was deeply embroiled in the 'post-colonial' cultural conflicts of his nation. Jones struggled to find expression between two languages and worked insistently (often antagonistically) in the Welsh literary scene throughout its most controversial century, when it fought to save the Welsh language and resolve its conflicting cultural factions into a consolidated national identity.

Jones was, to adopt the rubric of Bhabha, stranded in the cultural margins at the intersection of the English and Welsh languages, and this thesis situates itself accordingly. The first of six chapters examines the ways in which the Welsh-language culture of Wales engaged Glyn Jones, and explores how a liminal voice can establish its cultural validity via rewriting autobiography into a 'mythical' history. The second chapter adopts Harold Bloom, the concept of intertext and psychological notions of the 'other', to address Jones's conflicted relationship with Dylan Thomas. The third attempts to analyse his twentieth-century dialogue with Dafydd ap Gwilym as he seeks affirmation from his fourteenth-century double. The fourth continues this 'othering' of Welsh ancients and considers how Wales is refracted in some of his work through the literary excavation of Llywarch Hen, tenth-century defender of his princedom, but willing forfeiter of his sons. The fifth chapter considers how Jones inherited but re-invented the role of the *cyfarwydd* (storyteller), and the sixth explores how *Hen Benillion* (Welsh folk poetry) fostered his peculiarly Welsh Modernism.

DECLARATION

This work has not been previously accepted in substance for any degree and is not being concurrently submitted in candidature for any degree.

Signed ... . (Candidate)
Date .....20th July 2011.....

STATEMENT 1

This thesis is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. Where correction services have been used, the extent and nature of the correction is clearly marked in a footnote.

Other sources are acknowledged by footnotes giving explicit references. A bibliography is appended.

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STATEMENT 2

I hereby give consent for my thesis, if accepted, to be available for photocopying and for inter-library loan, and for the title and summary to be made available to outside organisations.

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My thanks are due to M. Wynn Thomas for patiently and painstakingly translating my flummery, and to Daniel Williams for his valuable responses on reading it.

As always, this is for you Joe King, from your Sidekick

Abbreviations

There are a number of texts that are so frequently referred to in this thesis that their references have been shortened to aid the fluency of the text. They are principally works by Glyn Jones and other primary sources. They are coded as follows:

CP Stevens, M. ed. *The Collected Poems of Glyn Jones* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1996)

CS Jones, G. *The Collected Stories of Glyn Jones,* ed. Tony Brown (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1999)

DTT Jones, G. *The Dragon has Two Tongues,* ed. Tony Brown (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2001)

HB Jones, G. *Hen Benillion: A people's Poetry* (Bridgend: Seren, 1991)

IA Jones, G. *The Island of Apples* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1992)

VCV Jones, G. *The Valley, the City, the Village,* 'Library of Wales' (Cardigan: Parthian, 2009)

CL Ferris, P. ed. *Dylan Thomas: The Collected Letters* (Great Britain: J.M. Dent and sons, 2000)

Introduction

'The choice for the Welshman who writes in English is this: to seek his fortune in the midst of a cosmopolitan confusion of poetasters and literary racketeers, or to try to realise himself within his own society, Wales'.[1]

It is well known that the 'Anglo-Welsh'[2] writer of the 1930s emerged into an unreceptive and dismissive Welsh-language culture and Saunders Lewis's strident claims require little embellishment here.[3] Each writer was measured by the rule of the Welsh language, and most were found to be fundamentally lacking. That the uncompromising cultural judgement against Wales having a valid 'English language' voice was inherited by a second generation of possibly more vociferous and exacting Welsh-language writers is also a defining characteristic of twentieth-century Welsh discourse. Following the call of the inspirational English-language nationalism of R.S.Thomas, poets such as Bobi Jones abandoned English entirely for the one Welsh tongue. Anthony Conran, also a convert, situated himself more centrally and amenably between the two languages, but still privileged the Welsh language and was guided by its governing influence when he experimented in his genuinely 'Welsh' writing in English. Throughout his career, as one of the original heretic 'Anglo-Welsh' writers of the 1930s, Glyn Jones is thus situated inevitably and frustratingly in antagonism with two generations of increasingly politicised and uncompromising Welsh 'establishments' which becomes significantly more palpable with the founding of the Academy of Welsh (language) Writing in 1959. There is little wonder therefore that his writing bears the mark of this impossibly difficult cultural environment.

Other Welsh writers in the English language have been considered in terms of the influence that their English creative work reveals, and the debt they owe to the Welsh language and its literature.[4] Glyn Jones is perhaps not an obvious choice to succeed in this line. He is primarily explored as a writer who is aspiring to Welsh-language credibility, but is situated, often reluctantly and apologetically, on the 'Anglo' side of 'Welsh'. His work is mostly considered in terms of the influences that he admittedly inherited from the English literary tradition. Indeed the most recent published work sees him located in the European tradition, Laura Wainwright reflecting on his debt to European artistic movements[5] and situated, by Tony Brown, as an illustrator of 'the Welsh uncanny'.[6]

In the latter study, Tony Brown recognises an oblique presence of 'otherness' that operates profoundly and disturbingly in the queerly 'uncanny' attitude of Jones towards the male 'worker'. In his article Brown has created a space in which Jones's linguistic shadows can be questioned and the strength of half-acknowledged meanings can be explored. This thesis also seeks to inhabit that ambiguous terrain of half spoken desires, and proffer it as the site on which Jones recreates and interrogates Welsh language 'others'. It attempts to isolate locations of conflict that arise from corresponding feelings of displacement and seem to be most accessible when Jones forces himself into a creatively 'direct' dialogue with specific figures, roles and ideologies.

Indeed it is because Jones so frequently accesses the Welsh language, its literature and its culture with anglicised Romantic lenses that shift, and arguably distort, his interpretation of Wales, that this relationship is so rich with textual

suggestion. This thesis attempts to answer a question in Welsh discourse that fully deserves to be asked. How far does the Welsh-language and its literature figure within his 'Anglo-Welsh' work? How far does he engage with more than an obliquely registered, and self-projected, shadow culture? How much of Wales enters his work, and does this presence in fact tilt the balance of his hyphenated status further towards 'Welsh' than even he may ever have admitted? Jones always consciously, unapologetically, and often resignedly, situated himself in the direct line of vision (and fire) of the Welsh-language establishment regarding the location of the 'Anglo-Welsh' voice in Wales. As if patiently awaiting the processes of time and bilingualism to accept and place him, he very politely, but stubbornly, yielded no ground to those voices who would seek to silence him and his fellows, and this he achieves perhaps to the detriment of public appreciation of his own desperate and conflicted love of his mother tongue and her writings.

This thesis locates its analysis in the shadows and subtexts of Jones's creative works to expose the conflicts that resulted from his own determined positioning in his nation. That it traces the antagonisms as well as the debts to the Welsh language is perhaps what could make it slightly unpalatable on occasion. The creative texts are read frequently in a manner that unfolds an antipathy towards his heritage that is never prosaically vocalised by the writer, who yet (inexplicably) mobilises the extreme registers and the obscure and discordant tones of the grotesque and the surreal so often in his poetry and prose.

*

'Shadows, Struggles and Poetic Guilt': the first idea was that of a musical variation, where each chapter carries the imprint of this original refrain, and returns to it obsessively, is shaped by it, tries to escape but is governed by it as if by an innate need to return to its origin. For this is how I will always read Glyn Jones's work, as impossibly haunted by a cultural counterpoint he must always be either chasing down or being relentlessly pursued by. Hence the title, which has measured both the harmony and discord of my own thoughts with an unfaltering rhythm, and has liberated as much as it has limited my playing of Jones's work.

Like the light that so frequently and uncannily floods Jones's writing, this stubborn title has blinded as much as it has illuminated my own interpretation of his words. For Jones, the recurrent melody[7] is, of course, the dilemma composed by his entry into the antagonistic literary world of Wales in the late 1920s and 1930s.[8] The sense that Jones's variation of 'Welsh-ness' is inferior and but a copy pursuing its original, is one that is conferred on and not chosen by this Welsh writer in the English language. The difficult reconciliation of his own determined sense of 'Welsh' identity with that exile of the prodigal 'Anglo-Welsh' voice imposed by those writers of the Welsh language of the inter-war generation who claimed superior cultural rights, in the words of Louis MacNeice, 'left [Jones's] walls / dancing over and over with [its] shadow'.[9] His relation to Wales is a melody he plays inevitably, innocently and passionately in the shadows and subtexts of much of his work, and his struggle with Welsh identity feeds the anxiety that drives him creatively even when he seeks most

to evade it.[10] Circumstanced as he thus is, he seems always to be, as a writer, 'confronted by the menace of the gathering stars' (*CP,* 17).

Perhaps the most engaging and accessible instance of his struggle is to be found in *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* Thirty years after Jones's emergence as a writer he here attempts to find a language for the several rival and uncertain versions of Welsh identity that are available to him. The identity of the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers of his generation is tackled in the 'Autobiography' which opens this seminal text. It introduces the persistent refrain of belonging and resistant antipathy that haunts Jones's work, and which is explored in a variety of guises in the following chapters. The purpose in this opening chapter is to convey the way in which Jones positions himself and his contemporaries within the two cultures of Wales by creating a model of cultural exchange from the story of his own family history. Presenting his family tree as measure, if not archetype, Jones, acting as *cyfarwydd* (tribal storyteller), reveals how the territory between the two languages and cultures of Wales is not divided by as abrupt a chasm as some of his contemporaries may suggest. He re-imagines Merthyr as a 'Bhabian' region of liminality in which intense creative bridges between the two languages and cultures are firmly negotiated by people such as his grandfather. For Jones, this heroic Bendigeidfran is a giant bestriding a culturally divided Wales.

This apparently innocent and conciliatory 'Autobiography' will, however, be revealed to be a subversive exercise in the manufacture of an Anglo-Welsh identity – one that resolutely justifies and validates the existence of a nation with 'two tongues', but at a time when the rights of the Welsh language were most militantly and

anxiously fought for.[11] The model of nationhood Jones creates is implicitly in deliberate antagonism with that idea of Wales that privileges the Welsh language. Given their relative fewness (1 in 4 monoglot speakers in the mid-1960s), and the fragility of what they desired to protect, it may seem surprising that the influential Welsh language writers of the period should come to represent an oppressive 'establishment' for Jones and other English language writers of Wales.[12] Indeed it was because of the very fragility of Welsh-language culture that it was difficult for Anglo-Welsh writers to fully acknowledge its authority as the intimidating and overwhelming presence it actually was, and so, any criticism of this culture in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* is frequently confined to the subtext. The first substantial generation of Anglo-Welsh writers had to consciously (and often publicly) situate themselves in relation to the language if they were to justify their nationality and their identity. The sense that one could be writing against the idea of Wales if a direct challenge was made to the Welsh-language ideology of nation was both spoken and unspoken fact. Jones is constantly writing and struggling against the overpowering nature of a nationalism that fails to adequately account for his identity and that of the people he represents.

Such an analysis of the 'Autobiography' not only reveals Jones's alternative historical model of the 'Anglo-Welsh', but also serves as illumination for the more subversive and radical meanings in his creative texts. Jones seems to be struggling with a barely acknowledged adversary in much of his creative work, and suffers an antagonism towards it that he barely dares to name. (Tony Brown has recently identified aspects of this oppressive and silenced presence that Jones fails to give direct expression to, in his suggestive essay 'Glyn Jones and the Uncanny'.[13] This

criticism has revealed that a close examination of Jones's language can decode deeply embedded and controversial preoccupations). The more one confronts the subtleties of his language and his tropes, these half expressed meanings seem to exert a striking and insistent hold over his work. Jones desires to become as 'Welsh' as his nameless adversaries demand – but on his own uncompromisingly Anglophone terms – and thus creates a conflict that is characteristic of both his divided nation and his divided psyche. So wearily subversive, and marked by this division, are the texts that one wonders whether Jones himself is 'The dragon with two tongues', breathing a subtle yet inflammatory fire into contemporaneous contentious national discourse. [14]

This first chapter also considers the way in which the creative work of Jones fails to present a national vision as coherent and uncomplicated as that he aspires to in the 'Autobiography'. The resentment that is restrained in the prose finds release through the potential for ambiguity in poetic language. What thus emerges in the short stories is both an antipathy towards the Welsh-language establishment that can partly be accounted for by the subsequent conflict of the 1960s era of joint literary academies and cultural politics that provoked the publication of *The Dragon has Two Tongues*. The sensitivities of the time are sufficient to explain why at this juncture the creative work became the ground on which earlier antagonisms are played out. The stories harbour many shadows of the other Wales against which Jones must always measure himself and be found lacking. It is a Wales that is at once desired and censured, loved and hated and one with which Jones is in constant, yet subtle, dialogue. In 'The Wanderer' and 'Price Parry', Welsh-language writers and their favoured tropes are requisitioned and challenged, and the issue of cultural difference

is addressed through strange modern parables that engage with some of the more bitter and unpleasant realities of Welsh literary 'apartheid'.

The construction of his own family history in the first pages of the 'Autobiography', with which *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* opens, seems positively to invite a close textual reading, and it is one that not only considers Jones's own storytelling techniques as those inherited from the Welsh storyteller, the *cyfarwydd,* but also addresses the plausibility of this 'story' as a form of 'Anglo-Welsh' origin myth. This unusual autobiographical chapter introducing a body of critical essays is itself revealed to be a form of cultural storytelling, a narrative devised to explain and authenticate the marginalised existence of a large group of disinherited 'Welsh' people.

A corresponding blend of love and hate, desire and censorship is that which governs Jones's relationship with Dylan Thomas, the subject of the next chapter. It is Thomas who perhaps casts the shadow that most truly haunts Jones. In the relationship between the pair one can again trace that split, that duality that Jones is struggling with throughout his career. In fact one could almost say that this relationship in many ways personifies what is at other times psychologically abstracted. In Thomas's eyes Jones is forced to adopt the identity of the Welshman that Jones feels at other times he can only ever incompletely and inadequately be. Thomas provokes in him a series of four obscure poems ('Sande', 'Easter', 'Man' and 'Rant') that embody the ensuing creative struggle between the two young 'friends' and rivals. These poems are composed of a set of densely packed, even compacted images that are the site of one writer's struggle to free himself from the overbearing

influence of another. They reveal the fragility as well as the resilience of Jones's art, when he comes up against a figure apparently much more confident in his cultural alignment than he is himself. Just as Jones must justify his art culturally against the Welsh-language critics, so here in the figure of Thomas he faces an Anglophone Welsh poet who, precociously assured, seems already to have made the English language effortlessly his own. For Jones, Thomas comes to seem his Anglophone Welsh double, a powerful shadow-self. Jones's struggle with him in this form anticipates his struggles elsewhere and later in his writing with other doppelgängers he finds in the Welsh-language poetic tradition with which he makes himself familiar – cultural progenitors he has, in a way, been preparing himself to meet through the early surrogate example of Dylan Thomas.

His meeting with the *beirdd,* (of the Welsh poetic tradition) becomes a primary site of struggle for Jones, one where his passions come into direct contact with his beliefs, and the desire to conform to the values and strictures of the original Welsh poet clashes with his more socialist ideology and understanding of how history silences as much as it speaks. Chapter three introduces the psychological skirmishing that occurs as the earlier Jones gradually attempts to assimilate the two cultures that he is eventually so determined to unite in *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* His developing love and knowledge of Welsh-language poetry[15] from the early thirties onwards, would seem to absolve Jones from the cultural ignorance evidenced by so many of the early critics of the 'Anglo-Welsh'. He immersed himself in his lost language. However, the ideology of the conservative *beirdd* and the society they upheld collided impossibly with the allegiance owed to 'the people', the industrial proletariat, who were of paramount importance to him in the revolutionary 30s and

beyond. The more Jones loved and aspired to emulate the first Welsh-language poets the more he felt he betrayed and silenced the 'people'. And compounding this ideological dilemma is an associated cultural one: Jones's anglicised tendency towards English Romanticism confuses his relationship with the *beirdd.* The isolation of the Romantic poet is in conflict with both the communal function of the Welsh *beirdd* and his sense of obligation, as artist, to the people of the valleys (the proletariat) whom he feels he should represent.

A number of iconic figures from Welsh-language literature are invoked by Jones in his poems. Taliesin is gently but thoroughly interrogated in 'You, Taliesin'. Dafydd ap Gwilym is also called to account. Jones translates him, hails him (in 'Henffych, Dafydd'), re-inhabits his work and extends his tropes. In this particular poem he literally re-inhabits 'The Ruin'[16] to cross-examine ap Gwilym and ostensibly his own poetic self. He returns to Dafydd ap Gwilym over and over again in his poetry and his prose, and this passion for his work and its associated anxiety and guilt are unfolded in this third chapter. The poetry of Dafydd ap Gwilym becomes the site on which the struggles of culture and ideology are most consistently and coherently conducted.

The next chapter is both a continuation of the last and independent of it. It considers the influence of the saga poet Llywarch Hen on Jones's unfinished final work, *Seven Keys to Shaderdom.* The shadows that loiter in this final lengthy poem still bear the indelible imprint of his nation. Jones explores some quite reactionary ideas of his country via his alter ego 'Shader Twm', who is dressed in the 'hippodamous' language and mood of 'Llywarch the old'. Both implicitly and

explicitly contentious ideas of the individual and his nation are laid out via the mind and body of the ageing fool/clown who can, like his Shakespearean counterpart, escape with voicing a truth that may hurt or outrage propriety. Decency is no longer a concern for the artist whose body is turned cankerous and whose mind is approaching unreason. The anxieties that have characterised and splintered Jones's work, throughout his life, the struggles that have tormented the subtexts, are hung like ill-fitting clothes on his last model, whose body and mind have both become images of the condition of Jones's country. The way in which the nation is filtered through the poet's situation, his personal memories, and his attitudes is laid open in this chapter, which is arguably the most contentious, as it challenges much that is entrenched and indeed sensitive in Welsh discourse. It examines the way in which Jones uses the figure of Llywarch Hen to explore some of the most controversial issues that faced Wales and its literature in his own lifetime: specifically the privileging of the Welsh language, with the resulting national ideology presented as clichéd and impractical.[17] It assesses the political relevance of ancient saga to the Wales of the twentieth century and shows that a shadow of Jones lurks, not only in the figure of the old man surveying his past, but also in the figure of Gwen (Llywarch Hen's reluctant and yet still heroic son). This late poem asserts once again the absolute validity, for Jones, of the 'Anglo-Welsh' voice, and returns to the image of the tree to confirm this lineage. In contrast to John Pikoulis's earlier study,[18] this reading of the trope sees the tree as an image of the nation. And while it is difficult to isolate the nation from the individual in this poem, each is shown to be necessarily a reflection of the other.

In his novel *The Valley, the City, the Village,* Jones attempts to give a form to his nation by subdividing it into three distinct psycho-geographical areas. For the

young protagonist Trystan, each represents a different aspect of 'Welsh-ness'.[19] This ordered means of representing and comprehending Wales reveals three seemingly distinct manifestations of Welsh culture and tradition that are united in the experiences of the individual Trystan. He may feel unsettled, without place in this tri-fold nation, but he is able to find a certain peace, vision and knowledge that enables an unspecified and uncertain future to be implied even by the strangely apocalyptic close of the novel. Fast forwarding forty years, the late long poem, *Seven Keys to Shaderdom* (itself conveying metaphoric associations with the apocalypse) offers a very different interpretation of Wales as a nation. Here its form is shattered, the narrative broken, the earlier dividing lines between valley, city and village are confused in the mind and the ramblings of an aged artist who cannot see himself, his life and his nation clearly. Thus, through the disordered memories of one storyteller overcome by experience, one can trace the process through which a nation may lose a sense of itself, or at least be unable to shape a coherent sense of itself. Meic Stephens highlights one of Jones's jottings that is particularly pertinent to this poem: 'If I write a poem when I am 80, the poem has taken me eighty years to write'.[20]And yet this, his final work, is as much editorial collage as it is completed text. It is little wonder, therefore, that the shadows that lie in wait for Jones and his nation are too many to consider here in this purely exploratory chapter.

If Shader Twm's is a story that has lost its narrative structure, then a study of the role of the storyteller in Jones's work cannot but be fertile. The fifth chapter therefore concerns itself with Jones's relationship with, and interpretation of, the Welsh language figure of the *cyfarwydd,* or tribal storyteller. It attempts to show that this Welsh figure is a vital precursor of much of Jones's own storytelling techniques

and the associated attentiveness he displays towards even the most common forms of oral exchange in Wales. Consciously monumentalised and unconsciously mimicked, the *cyfarwydd* is a frequent haunter of Jones's work. The figure is found to be extensively characterised in the texts, in both idealised and subverted form. His techniques are imitated and translated into Jones's Modernist experimentalisms. The cultural significance of the storyteller is therefore explored in this chapter, as is the related issue of the truths implicated by the 'falsity' of tale-telling. Tall stories are examined as the means of challenging established truths, and the novel *The Island of Apples*, in some way the tallest story of all, is read as the site in which the desire to sustain the native storytelling tradition is sabotaged by unstable narration and subtle metaphoric attacks upon both the Welsh language establishment and the English colonisers. Cultural guilt, defiance of that guilt and the desire simply to escape the legacies of cultural history itself, are all juggled in this strange story that flirts with magic realism but never fully commits to its devices.

The translation of the body of Welsh language folk poems known as the *Hen Benillion* preoccupied Jones for many years. The final chapter revisits the concerns raised in chapter three, and explores the way in which the translation of these folk poems could have offered Glyn Jones a means of solving the moral conflict that so troubled him. However, such solutions to the issue of secure identity are proved to be superficial as the *Hen Benillion* in their turn are revealed to be as problematic and culturally contested as all the other sites of negotiation that have been considered. Jones's obsession with these indigenous folk stanzas is partly inherited from the English Romantic passion for such folk forms. His point of access is thus tainted and inevitably an unintentional form of cultural ambush, and so, he is prevented again

from establishing a pure uncomplicated connection with the Welsh-language tradition. And despite his concern for the 'people', the ordinary workers, whose voice he supposed could already be heard in the *Hen Benillion,* the fact is that the politics and industrial plight of the 'proletariat', with which he thereby tried to identify, figure only briefly in his work.

This final chapter tries to avoid re-treading the ground covered by the previous chapters by analysing the cultural meaning that Jones struggled to derive from the *Hen Benillion* and ascertaining just how far he was in fact able to transpose it into his own work. The impact of the earlier folk poetry on Jones's own individual experimental Modernism is profound, and yet primarily not political (as he'd perhaps desired) but aesthetic. If Jones is drawn towards the verses because they appeal to his socialist inclinations, it is not this that actually most intensely inflects his own work. Instead these anonymous 'folk' become the vehicle for expressing a form of Modernist alienation. The spare language of the Welsh folk poets and the sparse historical detail accompanying the poems is reflected in the bare simple abstraction of short stories such as 'The Apple Tree'. Moreover, the early desire to create a plain body of workers' poetry loses impetus as Jones characteristically becomes seduced by the rich, not to say exotic, possibilities of language, image and trope. And yet, these stories, despite Jones's repeated insistence to the contrary, are profoundly but implicitly involved in the impossible cultural dialectic of Wales simply by the very archetypical nature of their narrative and metaphoric structure. It is the emphasis on the specific cultural location of the experience of personal alienation that proves Jones's particular brand of Modernism to be distinctly Welsh.

This last chapter closes with a short consideration of the relationship between orality and modernism, via a consideration of the radio poem 'The Dream of Jake Hopkins' and the way in which this later work stands at a crossroads where influence from both English and Welsh folk forms meet. This is an intersection that Jones eventually inevitably finds himself at since it has been the source of most of the struggle that is considered in this thesis. What is rarely acknowledged is the fact that Jones is, as writer, not necessarily dwarfed by the shadow of Welsh Wales, and that his guilt not only drives him to seek and adulate doubles in the Welsh language tradition, but also compels him to challenge them. The line between homage and parody is adhered to very closely by Glyn Jones. Seminal texts and writers that are contemporary with him are frequently and subtly lampooned and queried rather than being openly hailed as earlier figures such as Taliesin, Dafydd ap Gwilym and Llywarch Hen are. (In fact, one wonders whether his repeated questioning of the Welsh-language 'icons' is simply a means of disguising a more contentious and frustrated defiance towards more living figures). Texts are implicitly alluded to, ideas and ideology is subtly disputed, and shadowy figures, such as Saunders Lewis and Dylan Thomas, can be discerned in carefully drawn cultural types.

There is, therefore, much about Jones's writing that is more subversive than more conservative readings have ever allowed for. Familiarisation with the mild-mannered and unprepossessing author has perhaps governed other interpretations of his work at the expense of the full acknowledgement of his strikingly latent darker side that emerges so frequently, if unexpectedly.[21] I am certain that beneath the genuine mild-mannered veneer, Jones is nothing if not radically challenging (a conscientious objector cannot be anything but an uncompromising activist). Niceness

can be a blinding light that acts as a veneer which deflects criticism and obscures more questionable shadows. In Jones's work, the silences speak a dissident truth.

There are of course more obvious, able and more successful Welsh poets and storytellers who spring to mind when considering subversion and satire in Wales. However, none are as subtly or as gently humorous as Glyn Jones, nor are they as forgiving (satire rarely offers the kind of mercy that Jones proffers). In fact he can be so understated that much of his disguised antagonism towards the cultural predicaments of Wales has escaped critical comment for nearly a century. The fact that he does not come bearing knives to skin the flesh of the pretenders is perhaps what makes his work so deadly effective, and yet so easily sidelined. Jones may not stir controversy, but, when one begins to interrogate his forms and language, he does turn out to be more controversial and arguably more divisively incendiary on occasion than other more openly insubordinate writers.

[1] Davies Aberpennar quoted in Meic Stephens, 'Yr Academi Gymreig and Cymdeithas Cymru Newydd', *Poetry Wales,* Vol. 4 No.2 (Winter 1968).

[2] Without resorting to extensive appreciation of the fact that 'Anglo-Welsh' has been and still is a greatly contested signifier, I shall respect this fact by always containing (and embracing) its controversy in inverted commas. However, defending its use in the context of this thesis, Glyn Jones was happy to appellate himself as 'Anglo-Welsh,' and distinguish himself as a child of that specific emergent generation of writers in the 1930s. The central dynamic theme of this thesis is the recognition of this and the fact, that in many ways, he never escaped from the conflicts and divisions that reside within this early hyphenation.

[3] Saunders Lewis, 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?': being the annual lecture delivered to the branch on December 10th, 1938 (Caerdydd : Urdd Graddedigion Prifysgol Cymru, 1939)

[4] See M. Wynn Thomas, 'Hidden Attachments', *Corresponding Cultures* (Cardiff: UWP, 1999) Note particularly the pages referring to Harri Webb. See also Jason Walford Davies, 'Thick Ambush of Shadows: Allusions to Welsh Literature in the work of R.S.Thomas', in *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays,* 1 (1995), 75-127, where he explores the extensive debt of R.S. Thomas to the Welsh language and its literature. This is certainly not a definitive nor exhaustive list.

[5] Laura Wainwright, "'The huge upright Europe-reflecting mirror': The European Dimension in the Early Short Stories and Poems of Glyn Jones", *Almanac: Yearbook of Welsh Writing in English* 12 (2007-8) 55-88.

[6] Tony Brown, 'Glyn Jones and the 'Uncanny', *Almanac: A Yearbook of Welsh Writing in English* 12 (2007-8) 89-114.

[7] In the early copy (1940s) of *The Valley, the City, The Village* entitled *Welsh Heirs* Jones refers repeatedly to a 'sinfonia' (see 'Welsh Heirs: Notebook, Part II', NLW MS 20709C. Glyn Jones Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth). In the language of the baroque, the sinfonia was frequently a trio sonata (the correlations to the structure of Jones's novel are latent) so my own tendency towards a musical reading is inevitably intuitively informed by Jones's own creative rhythms. Other definitions of the 'sinfonia' include being an overture, and intermezzo and/or a postlude and those are again significant for the novel. Musical composition can thus become a valuable trope when reading Glyn Jones's work, as he is himself inclined towards framing his nation through its rudiments. *The Valley, the City, the Village* in particular could be considered an overture to a new form of national unity.

[8] See Meic Stephens, 'Yr Academi Gymreig and Cymdeithas Cymru Newydd', *Poetry Wales*, Vol. 4 No.2 (Winter 1968). The historical detail of the journey towards 'acceptance' could partially account for the insistent and recurrent preoccupation in Jones's work with belonging. Stephens writes of how the war intervened in, and undermined, the vigorous desire of Kiedrych Rhys, Davies Aberpennar, and also, unmentioned, Glyn Jones for the establishment of an 'Anglo-Welsh' writers group such as Cymdeithas Cymru Newydd. He recounts how this general passion seemed to disperse after the Second World War, until it was focused once again in the 1960s towards achieving the English branch of Yr Academi Gymreig, which is the celebratory purpose of Stephens's article. Jones was committed to both groups (giving the inaugural address at the first meeting of yr Academi Gymreig in June 1968) and was one writer perhaps for whom the war did not intervene in quite the same manner as it did for the other writers. Spending it, as he did, tormented and isolated, in Wales, teaching as a conscientious objector only seemed to consolidate and reinforce his need for creative belonging rather than diminishing it.

[9] Louise MacNeice, 'Autumn Journal (1938)', *Collected Poems* (London: Faber, 1979) 101-156, 107.

[10] In his published and unpublished papers at the NLW Jones repeatedly refers to his early lack of Welsh consciousness. He writes that 'I had no more idea of interpreting Wales to anyone than I had of flying' (see notebook entitled 'The Dragon has Two Tongues', NLW MS 20717C. Glyn Jones Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth). And yet this thesis will suggest that it is in his early work that subtle allusions to his country can be easily read beneath the text and via the tropes.

[11] Before being utilised in *The Dragon has Two Tongues,* the 'Autobiography' was presented in a very similar form to the Welsh Academy of Writers, as a 'Welsh Apologia'. 'Apologia', despite being defined as a 'reasoned argument', still resonates ambiguously with the modern definition of an 'apology'. Yet this 'Autobiography' is far from being apologetic. This reasoned argument flirts with deprecation, whilst mobilising all the skills of rhetoric to develop an argument of structurally reinforced reason. It is one that is certainly not openly contentious, but it *is* firmly resistant to the idea that his generation of writers is in any way culpable for the fate of the language.

[12] This is especially true when so many of the subsequent generation of English speaking writers were consciously rejecting the Anglicisation of Wales and returning to Welsh as the primary medium of creativity. See the 'Editorial', *Anglo- Welsh Review,* Vol. 10 (1960) for a sense of urgency that surrounded the future of 'Anglo-Welsh' writing at this time (which refers directly to Glyn Jones's dismissed concern for the 'Anglo-Welsh'). There was little structure in place that ensured the continued publication of Welsh writing in English, and in contrast with the increasingly subsidised and institutionalised Welsh language and its literature, there seemed little hope for the 'Anglo-Welsh' to continue to flower without a comparable intervention.

[13] Op. cit.

[14] See 'Extracts from the notebooks of Glyn Jones: selected and introduced by Meic Stephens', *New Welsh Review,* No.29 (Summer 1995) 13-17: 'What divided the Welsh from the Anglo-Welsh [writers] wasn't so much writing like that of Caradoc Evans as their different ideologies. The myth for the Welsh was the burning of the aerodrome [at Penyberth], whereas for the Anglo-Welsh it was the Great depression'. The first chapter of this thesis proposes that Jones offers a myth of his own, that attempts to unite the origins of these two antagonistic ideologies, in the 'Autobiography' chapter of *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* It isolates a historical location, a specific generation, and even a form of heroic figure (his Grandfather) at which the two Welsh languages and ideologies meet, mingle and fuse.

[15] There are notebooks containing unpublished translations in the Glyn Jones Papers at the National Library of Wales, including a translation of Waldo Williams's poem 'Yr Hen Iaith' mixed in amongst the preparatory papers for *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* Tony Brown notes that these translations date from as early as the 1930s when Jones was taught by Saunders Lewis.

[16] See Tony Conran's translation of Dafydd ap Gwilym, 'The Ruin', *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003) 180-1.

[17] It is of course significant that Jones himself chose not to publish much of this work in his own lifetime. What he did offer to the public is considerably less than Meic Stephens' posthumously edited poem.

[18] See John Pikoulis, 'Llansteffan, Merthyr, Samarkand: The Question of Beauty in the Poetry of Glyn Jones's, *Welsh Writing in English* 5 (1999) 1-26. An excellent study which includes a reading of *Seven Keys to Shaderdom* that is different, yet still complementary to my own. It seems a short metaphoric step from considering the tree as an individual to reading it as symbolic of a nation.

[19] Interestingly none of the three areas appear to be dependent upon the other, a fact which is exaggerated by the lack of a conjunction between the three words. What could be made complete by the addition of *'and'* is left fragmented like a list (*The Valley, the City,* **and** *the Village.*) In a sense it is only Trystan that unites the three areas and makes them in some way 'whole'. Without his experience gradually ordering the three spaces of Wales, they would seem to be 'other' separate countries in which Trystan is constantly 'strange', and existentially exiled to the point that one who seeks to 'belong' to, and be defined by, his environment can ever fully be. This seems to invite a reading of the novel as revelatory and to be charting the development of how an isolated 'Anglo-Welsh' individual actually went about psychologically constructing his idea of Wales from the separate components he had to make fit. This is more than a 'coming of age' novel. It uses that classic theme of emergence into experience as a model as much for the realisation of a national identity, as for that of personal identity.

[20] See 'What was before the big bang?' *New Welsh Review,* No. 39 (Winter 97-98) 40-2.

[21] Ibid. 41. One of Jones's jottings reads: 'Some of my early poems seem to me like the work of a remote ancestor some of whose genes I have perhaps inherited'.

Chapter One

Merthyr, Heroes and Unfortunate Prodigals: Mythmaking and Boundary-breaking in *The Dragon has Two Tongues*

Myth, *n*: **c.** A popular conception of a person or thing which exaggerates or idealizes the truth.[1]

I, whom you despised so much, I Mati Tŷ-unnos was also a daughter of Rhodri Fawr, his blood flowed in my veins too, I had as much right to be on your tree as Griffith Benfras or Ifor ap Cynan. And what is more, Geta *fach* Glandwr, she too is a child of the Great King; we are all related vicar... ('Price-Parry'; *CS*, 161-2)

It is generally recognised that *The Dragon has Two Tongues* is an important text, not just as a critical and historical study, but also as a subtle record of Jones's own uncertain positioning in relationship to the two literary cultures of Wales. The text also shares generic features with some of Jones's creative work, which obliquely addresses the same fundamental issues. Bearing this in mind, it may therefore be useful to adopt a story-telling model to highlight significant features. The boundaries between myth and history are notoriously unsettled and Wales's sense of its past offers many examples of this. Most notable are the stories of the original Arthurian sagas, the stories of *The Mabinogion*, the myths that have evolved around the historical figure of Taliesin, tales of the later folk heroes such as Owen Glyndŵr and Dic Penderyn, and even the substantive myths that have arisen in the last century or

so around the elusive figure of Dafydd ap Gwilym. These 'historical myths' have played a vital role in the shaping of Welsh consciousness and identity. They demonstrate how history can be creatively and meaningfully transformed into a powerful mythology of cultural and political ideology. This transformation of history into a form of national discourse is a continuous, ongoing process that is always culturally present. The transformation of experience and memory into stories which explain how the individual is placed within his/her society is as much a contemporary process as it is a relic of the past. It is this process of cultural story-telling which occurs both consciously and unconsciously in Jones's text.

Of particular relevance to this notion of 'story-telling' is the second chapter of *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, which is simply entitled 'Autobiography'. There, Jones adopts the mantle of the *cyfarwydd* and tells his own story as that of his people. By exploring his own genealogy and exposing the bare bones of his own family, he is attempting to lay new foundations for a disinherited people: the 'Anglo-Welsh'. Essentially, in this vital chapter, Jones the *cyfarwydd* is telling himself and his people a story: a story of origin. To plunder an apt phrase from Gwyn A.Williams, he is explaining himself to himself,[2] and through this process providing a language/narrative in terms of which others may come to understand themselves in a comparable manner. By exploring and shaping his own family tree he is attempting to place himself within a specific cultural, and particularly literary, tradition. Using this family tree as a proto-type for the majority of Welsh writers, he claims that continuity between the two antagonistic cultures of Wales is not simply an idealistic hypothesis but that it has a validating, demonstrable history. Reading this autobiography alongside some of Jones's other creative texts reveals how invaluable the role of

cyfarwydd is to such a vision of a culturally unified redrawing of the Welsh map. In *The Valley, the City, the Village*, Uncle Gomer tells Trystan the stories of their family history in a manner that illuminates Jones's later exploration of his own family history in 'Autobiography'. It would seem that the story tellers of West Wales, like Uncle Gomer, would share both Jones's desire to make solid an uncertain memory and to construct a story that supports the foundations of a community. Creating stories and histories (if one can indeed differentiate between the two) to relate and sustain a sense of tradition is a process that is demonstrated to be integral to Welsh culture and one that has been celebrated as much as it has been required.

Throughout his work, Jones utilises the figure of the *Cyfarwydd* to demonstrate how the two literary cultures of Wales are irrevocably entwined. In his final unfinished poem, *Seven Keys to Shaderdom*, in a voice half inhabited by the ghost of the tenth-century poet Llywarch Hen, Shader Twm 'considers trees and inheritance' in much the same way that Jones considers his 'family tree' and his 'inheritance' in the earlier text:

> Dark tree of my age, you were
> In division; the grip that
> First separated branch, trunk-
> Like, twin, almost, low down, near
> The splayed streams of your roots, had
> Upon your trunk! (*CP*, 123)

Read as a metaphor for Wales, as much as it is the utterance of an individual conscious of an internal dichotomy, this passage gives creative shape to the concerns explored in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues.* The tree doubles itself at the root, 'like a twin, almost'. 'Almost' is the most strained word in the line, as it struggles to contain all the antagonistic differences that are wrestled with in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*: the twin cultural traditions of modern Wales are 'almost' the same, and yet not. The pertinent reading of this metaphor is that it implies a broken/distorted whole, for the Anglo-Welsh tradition is demonstrated to have emerged not merely from the same root system as its twin, but from the base –'low down'- of the primary trunk. The voice marvels at the strength of 'the grip' this first branch has upon the trunk, and the connotations this has for Wales and the search for an acceptable Anglo-Welsh identity hardly need clarification. One could only note that the grip seems as much a stranglehold as a determined fixture, and that its lowness could be read in a more old fashioned way as signifying 'inferior' to the same extent that it could be translated as 'fundamental'. In fact this integral ambiguity of meaning, one that is itself 'in division', serves as a non-specific defence for Jones's more subversive speculations, and demonstrates exactly that division that Jones is describing.

For Jones, this image of trees and branches is one that is also heavily embroiled in the tradition of story telling. There is the obvious genealogical implication with the tracing of family history through trees (an idea that is explored both in *The Valley, the City, the Village* and in the short story 'Price Parry'). For the Welsh *cyfarwydd*, memorizer of pedigree, the architecture of story telling is frequently articulated in terms of the symbol of heritage trees. In addition to this, the actual shape of an oral narrative is akin to that of a tree, as Trystan observes, as

spoken narratives diverge and 'proliferate' until they evoke the canopy of branches that evolve from one sturdy trunk. Oral folk and origin tales have many interconnecting relations and one story necessarily implicates another. *The Mabinogion* is famously divided into 'branches', and although this is a later imposition that attempts to unite tales that are not necessarily related, the impetus and the choice of metaphor remain relevant. That in Jones's work this trope also becomes the means of visualising the dichotomous nature of Wales, and the method through which the dichotomy is questioned, is apt for one who does so through the medium of story telling.

That Jones *needs* to reveal the Anglo-Welsh writers as a branch of the original Welsh tree, sharing the same root system as those writers who happen to have inherited the 'mother tongue' as their primary medium, is symptomatic both of the time in which he lived and of his own personal need to validate his own place in a Welsh tradition. The national stories of the time do not accommodate the English speakers and writers of Wales. Their existence is not comfortably verified by the governing Welsh-language narrative of the nation. In fact this clumsy second trunk is a disruptive and distorting presence for some twentieth-century Welsh 'nation builders', such as Saunders Lewis. How can one write the coherent narrative of a nation when its unity is being threatened from within its own boundaries? For Glyn Jones, this cultural and national uncertainty in which the Anglo-Welsh writer pursued his craft inspired an anxiety that had to be constantly addressed and redressed in his creative and his critical work. The 'Autobiography' in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* is arguably the most involved and direct instance in which Jones tackles this cultural division. It is also the most guarded instance, at times infuriatingly particular. The

dissenting voices that more subtly haunt his creative work are more strident, and yet often obscured.[3]

The suggestion in this chapter is that in 'Autobiography' Jones uses his own story as the raw material with which to fashion a collective myth to sustain and envelope those who are, like himself, situated outside the established Welsh mythology. This reading is developed to suggest that this story is repeatedly echoed and more contentiously explored via the same and similar tropes throughout the creative work. The (family) tree is a binding image,[4] one that implies, and innately classifies, belonging and exile. It facilitates the associated motif of the 'prodigal son', and reveals to what extent Jones is influenced by, and remains in dialogue with, the literature and national rhetoric of Welsh Wales.

Jones's exploration of his family and his own Welsh identity is effectively an exercise in repatriation. Before embarking upon the discussion of his own family tree, Jones justifies its purpose and relevance to the discussion of Anglo-Welsh literature.

> When I examine the traditions – social, religious and political –
> of my own family, I find them to be in large measure, I believe, characteristic of those of a number, even a majority of Anglo-Welsh writers; and although one man is no other man, a description of my own family background will throw considerable light, it seems to me, on the type of society and the conjunction of social forces and influences which helped to bring many of the better-known Anglo-Welsh writers of the twentieth century into being.[5]

That a kind of paradigm is implied in this clumsy passage is clear in spite of its hesitancy. Despite his obvious reserve ('although one man is no other man') Jones does utilise uncompromising terms such as 'characteristic' and 'type', which suggest that his 'own family background' should, and can, be regarded as a fixed lens through which to regard the 'tradition' and the location of the Anglo-Welsh culture. The length of the sentence and the extensive, apologetic, qualification of seemingly simple meanings may betray the sensitivity of the subject, yet they also demonstrate his polite determination to force a way through the obstacles that language (especially, for Jones, the English language in Wales) strews ambiguously in the path of meaning and clarity.

The first line of the autobiographical material reveals his primary preoccupation without stating it directly: that he and his contemporaries are originally and definitively 'Welsh'. He uses the term 'Anglo-Welsh' only for the lack of any other.

> I was born in 1905 in Merthyr Tydfil in Glamorgan, into a Welsh speaking family, so that my own first language was Welsh. (*DTT,* 9)

The emphatic, yet slightly gauche, doubling of the word 'Welsh' in this sentence exposes the political relevance of this document, and the preoccupations of its author. Such insistence is only necessary if there is some uncertainty to be addressed, or some challenge to be rebuffed. These are easy to locate. Challenges to the integrity of the emergent writers had frequently been laid down by the Welsh-language establishment since the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers had begun to be publicly conscious of

themselves as a group. It is these critical voices that Jones refutes and rebukes in the last paragraph of the chapter when he controversially claims that the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers did not turn away from their mother-tongue, it turned away from them. He may desire to reaffirm his contemporaries but it is the Welsh literary establishment (the *Academi*) that he desires to persuade. Jones uses his first sentence to unequivocally expose the first skeletal branch of his personal history, to announce the primary intention of his story and to create a space for the fictions of another Wales. All this is immediate testament to the intention of rewriting and affirming the Anglo-Welsh position. As soon as you state 'I was born' you are definitively fixing yourself in time and space – placing yourself in the procession of history. Where identity is not firmly rooted in the established historical narrative, when meaning is not tattooed upon the culture you inhabit by years of repeated tradition and certainty, the words 'I was born in...' and whatever place and date succeeds them, become more than a statement of fact. They are rather the ground upon which a self can be constructed. There can be no innocence in their utterance, because they offer the kind of tangible certainty that is rare for those situated, as Bhabha observes, in the interstices between cultures.[6]

Merthyr Tydfil, as Jones unintentionally implies in his text, is situated on such a potentially Bhabhian fault line. Its lineage is both ancient and modern, both rural and industrial, both Welsh, anglicised and the location of other incoming cultures. It has been a place of transition and negotiation and it is upon the invisible boundaries that mark this town that Jones proposes to base a creative identity that has been forged at the conjunction of the two cultures. Merthyr Tydfil thus occupies a pivotal position in Jones's origin myth of the 'Anglo-Welsh'. In the first paragraph he

establishes the historic nature of the place, which is named after a fifth century saint and is consequently a Welsh holy site. This immediately disengages the reader from the ready adverse associations that are triggered at the mention of his home town, connected as it is with ores, coals and intensive industries that blacken beauty and dull human spirit. The Merthyr Tydfil that Jones uncovers is one that is more than the sum of its industrial experience. It is a place in which his mother's agricultural family had lived on farms for years before anyone realised there might be something precious inside the earth they scratched for a living. Industrialism therefore did not lift Merthyr out of the land with the iron ore. It has a heritage that locates it in a very early historical landscape and one that associates it from the late eighteenth century onwards with intensive mining and human migration. More than one layer of Welsh history overlaps in Merthyr, as does more than one language.

Jones's desire to construct a model of 'Anglo-Welshness' from the particular socio-cultural materials of Merthyr Tydfil instanced in three generations of his own family tree inevitably has limitations when it comes to accurately accounting for the variety of experiences that may characterise all the other valley towns (and indeed the full range of experiences that were to be found in Merthyr itself). It is this Anglo-Welsh diversity that inevitably shifts Jones's personal historicising into the realm of mythmaking and fiction. His autobiography, arguably, becomes as much a piece of fiction as his creative work. The temporal depth of the history (three generations of Welsh speakers) he relates is entirely specific to the social geography of Merthyr Tydfil, and this is strikingly different from that of the more southern valleys. Merthyr Tydfil was the first industrial valley town to emerge, and it stood alone for a considerable period of time, sourcing the majority of its early nineteenth-century

work force from inside Wales. It was at least fifty years older than the other Valley towns, which had very different migration patterns, as the work forces were drawn from outside the Welsh nation in a comparatively explosive period of time. And unlike other townships in the south-eastern Valleys of the South Wales Coalfield, its early history featured an extended period of Welsh-language culture.

However, the limitation of history becomes the liberation of mythology, for the very fact that Merthyr *is* the original industrial town of South Wales, the progenitor of those more southerly towns that succeeded it, makes it an ideal candidate for the legendary status that is implied in and fundamental to this text. As Jones is concerned to shape an origin myth of 'Anglo-Welsh' Wales, there could be no more logical place to locate it than Merthyr Tydfil. Jones is conscious of the fact that his birth place was already an established archetype as well as a prototype, being the raw, rambunctious pioneer of industrial society and a controversial crucible of poverty and proletarian rebellion. He reveals an awareness of Merthyr's contentious reputation in his literary references to Carlyle ('It is like a vision of Hell!' [*DTT,* 11]), and also to Trollope's fictional Reverend who fainted at the thought of being posted to the Welsh town. These already infamous associations of Merthyr Tydfil are utilised by Jones to produce his own, very different, story. These writers who represented Merthyr in the nineteenth century saw only with the eyes of outsiders. Jones effectively lifts the veil of their alien myth to expose another, more indigenous one. At the same time, he subtly insinuates that to dismiss Merthyr as an industrialised 'hell' is to dismiss a vital part of Wales and Welsh cultural development in a manner that can only be allied with such colonising tendencies towards silence that characterise the impact of the English and their literary establishment. The Welsh *and* the English suddenly become

strange and antagonistic allies against the Anglo-Welsh, and the writers in the Welsh language become themselves culpable for sustaining the alien 'myths' of South Welsh history as their contemporary writers still utilise comparable biblical language and the metaphors of 'hell' and apocalypse to describe, and thus marginalise, these areas.

For Jones, the 'poverty', 'squalor' and its associated visual repulsiveness, is not the defining characteristic of the town. Merthyr Tydfil is the location of a ferociously intense creativity that was fuelled by the 'conjunction' of the Welsh literary and religious culture and the industrialism that determined the patterns of everyday life.

> The frustrated and even oppressed Welsh peasantry who flocked into Merthyr brought with them their own language, their religion and culture, their social and political aspirations. So that Merthyr was not merely a place of poverty, unrest and industrial squalor, but also one of considerable intellectual ferment and artistic activity, a town in which chapels, as well as *eisteddfodau* and literary, musical and Welsh cultural societies, flourished. (*DTT,* 11)

As such a crucible, the town becomes for him a vital symbol of the 'Anglo-Welsh' people. It is in a sense the very birthplace of 'Anglo-Welshness'. It is both old and incorrigibly new. All the Valley towns can trace their bloodline through the veins of the ores in their earth back to that strangely located town at the head of all the Valleys.

If Merthyr is transformed by Jones into the Camelot of the Anglo-Welsh, then his grandfather 'Llwch-Haiarn' is its Arthur; the first knight of this Welsh culture, and of the society that is on the cusp of linguistic transformation. The romanticism with which Jones perceives and represents his paternal grandfather turns him into a pivotal figure in his 'story' of Merthyr as the crucible of Anglo-Welsh culture. The artistic creativity that is symbolised for Jones by his ancestor is intensely personal, and yet at the same time is offered as a representative sign that the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers are as entitled to claim their Welsh roots as are those writers who use the Welsh language. For Jones there cannot be a conclusive division between the two cultures of Wales when the originator of one is the authentic inheritor of the other. The image of Shader Twm's tree is evoked once again, as the Grandfather becomes implicated in both the sense of a Welsh cultural continuity and the divergence of its primary branches.

Llwch-Haiarn becomes a cultural signifier for Jones and the origins of the Anglo-Welsh 'type' can be traced in his situation and character. His grandfather's language and his cultural inheritance were those of any indigenous Welshman, but combined with the demands of his experiences of life in the turbulent industrial valleys, that inheritance morphed into another form, grew another substantial branch. Jones describes his grandfather as 'a great talker and debater, theologian, politician, philosopher, singer and musician, an indefatigable competitor and frequent winner at *eisteddfodau*' (*DTT,* 12). The breathless characteristics that Jones bestows upon his grandfather are, aside from being extensive, those that were conventionally associated with both the established culture of Wales ('singer and musician...') *and* the newer politicised culture of the Valleys ('great talker and debater...'). That both are united

in the character of his grandfather is a pertinent reflection of Jones's interpretation of the origins of the Anglo-Welsh. The two cultures, which at the time were considered by many to be antagonistic, are actually made of the same organic matter. 'Twins', the traits of one are the traits of the other and they are fused in the figure of the Grandfather who is both artist and agitator. He was 'a man of great outspokenness and independence of mind', 'Rebelliousness seemed part of his nature', he was roused against 'oppression', and yet at the same time 'belonged [to] the world of the Cymreigyddion, the Welsh literary society' (*DTT,* 12). In few pages Jones paints a remarkable portrait of his progenitor upon whose gigantic frame he drapes the identity of a culture like a flag. In Llwch-Haiarn Jones presents a transitional figure: that of the Welsh speaking *bardd* with the political consciousness that came to characterise the increasingly anglicised Valley life. The imagined boundary between Welsh-language and English-language Wales is called into question by the existence of this ebulliently evoked figure that stands like a deeply rooted tree at the centre of Jones's imagined Merthyr.

However, how far Llwch-Haiarn is a construction of an eager imagination and born of an ideological need is interesting especially when one is considering the creation of a modern myth. His grandfather was a personal stranger to Jones, and arguably it is this lack of immediate knowledge that enables the construction of such a monumental figure. In comparison, his parents receive a much more measured consideration. Although they are clearly, like himself, inheritors of Llwch-Haiarn's world, the restraint with which they are described is perhaps attributable to the fact that their real humanity is harder to evade and their characters are not as easy to furnish as the comparative silence of the distant grandfather.

It is significant that Jones lists a portrait of his grandfather as one of four that hung in his own family home. The romantic idealism with which he represents this unknown figure of his past is the product of a familiarity that has been fuelled by the imagination in awe of what it itself sees as much as of any solid factual knowledge. These traits Jones has so convincingly pieced together from the stories and fragments he himself has inherited do seem to be cast in as luminous a light as that which distorted the real figure of Karl in Dewi's first visions of his friend in Jones's novel *The Island of Apples.* It is certainly illuminating that Jones's mother, the family genealogist from whom he inherited much of what he reshapes in this text, barely 'exchange[d] more than half a dozen words' with his grandfather. The retelling of stories told is a primary occupation of the *cyfarwydd* (tribal storyteller), as is adding to that fiction when a silence disturbs the relevance of the meaning in the present telling. However, it is from the barest facts that Llwch-Haiarn emerges from the text, and Jones's uneasy consciousness of the slightness of his evidence is betrayed by the frequent hesitancy of the language (the emphasis is mine):

> These were **perhaps** the best-known literary figures...
>
> Poets and musicians **seem** to have abounded...
>
> I **suppose** we can credit...
>
> I **doubt** insurance meant much to him. (*DTT*, 12)

Jones can here actually be seen to fill in the blanks to create a coherent narrative, one that is fitting for, and subservient to, his own historical moment. That Jones is conscious of this process reveals an awareness that he is, on one level, telling stories, and that the history he is attempting to recreate is dictated by his mother's memory,

and his own imagination, and therefore not based on solid knowledge. His heroic grandfather exists in history only as Jones imagines him to be and this is as an archetype both for his time and for the Anglo-Welsh writers of the twentieth century. The line between a memory and a dream, a history and a fiction, is a thin one. Since Jones refers to 'memories dense as elephant grass' that 'swarm around, in some common past' in the poem 'Merthyr' (*CP,* 31-4), it is not surprising that he found it difficult to distinguish in his own writing between truth and comforting fiction.

To highlight this dynamic process of 'myth-making' and 'hero-building' it is worth placing Jones's evocation of Llwch-Haiarn alongside the picture of Dante painted by Carlyle in *On Heroes, Heroism and Hero-Worship.* Carlyle derives his understanding of Dante the man from a portrait by Giotto (only *believed* to be that of the poet). And accordingly he admits that

> His biography is, as it were, irrevocably lost for us. An unimportant, wandering sorrow stricken man, not much note was taken of him while he lived; and the most of that has vanished, in the long space that now intervenes...Lonely there, painted as on vacancy, with the simple Laurel wound round it; the deathless sorrow and pain, the known victory which is also deathless; - significant of the whole history of Dante![7]

For both Jones and Carlyle, a picture becomes integral to the construction of a poetic hero, and for both, little or nothing solid is known about the heroes they wish to laud. Both their portraits are therefore examples of the romantic construction of a 'hero' from little more than rumour, desire and a real cultural and/or artistic need to

transform the past into a meaningful myth for the future. So, a life is conjured from fragments as surely as *Blodeuwedd* was conjured from the petals of flowers. Any fragment of certainty is seized upon and becomes the nucleus around which an idealised figure is formed and Llwch-Haiarn is made to serve a particular purpose, as much as was *Blodeuwedd.* It is a vital form of literary magic that can invoke an entire person from a few strands of their being. Thus, Glyn Jones the possessor of certain inherited artefacts ('I still have the blue and gold illuminated address...'), and having lived his whole life with the portrait of his grandfather on the wall of the family home, breathes life into a shadow, into a dream. Just as Carlyle educes Dante's character from Giotto's untitled portrait and the book he wrote, Jones re-forms his Grandfather from a picture and the snippets of questionable truth he has memorised.

*

> That's why, perhaps, I'm one of those who've sought
> To make Wales true to the undivided name.[8]

One can consider the rewriting of a historical narrative or the construction of 'Welsh' myths in the second half of the twentieth century without considering the implications that recent literary theory may have for the process. However, it *is* significant that around the same time that Jones wrote *The Dragon has Two Tongues* Foucault wrote his seminal theoretical study *The Archaeology of Knowledge*, in which he called for a re-examination of all the narrative strategies through which history is constructed.[9] Castigating the myth of cultural unity and the academic dependencies upon its tropes, he dismantled the desire for the type of linear coherence

that Jones seeks to establish in his own autobiography. The construction of an image of cultural coherence through highly selective historical narrative has been exposed by post-modernity as the production of a comforting fiction by a ruling elite. Considered in the light of this contemporaneous theory, Jones's own mythmaking becomes even more significant, not only as the product of his own creative vision, but also as a specifically Welsh instance of a widespread intellectual tendency to rewrite the past in the image of coherent unities. Placed thus, in its immediate cultural context and its particular historic moment, this impulse can be seen to have a distinctive and highly significant 'local' import. The notion that critical theories such as Foucault's are deconstructive tools of value primarily, if not exclusively, to dominant nations secure in their identities and their histories, becomes increasingly plausible when one considers the different case of Wales, a 'subaltern' country that, or so it might be argued, could, at the time of the writing of *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, ill afford the demolition of what might be viewed as a necessary, enabling, myth of distinctive cultural identity.

The brokering of a unity between the two linguistic cultures was understandably and controversially desired by many in the 1960s. The 'return' to the Welsh language was actively encouraged in influential quarters, and the 'prodigals' were gradually summoned back to the fold. In the late fifties, Idris Bell had launched his magazine *Welsh Unity*,[10] with the express aim of introducing and encouraging the English-speaking Welsh to learn more about their national tongue and the heritage it sustained. That it lasted for only three issues says much about the insecure climate it sought to improve. Many 'Anglo-Welsh' periodicals were in danger at this time[11] and this uncertainty was only compounded by the gradual, and understandable favouring

of the Welsh language. By the 1960s, when Jones began work on his text, his generation was still criticised and regarded with cultural suspicion not only by the Welsh-language writers but also by the second generation of Welsh writers using the English language. In 1960 a gentle yet determined Anthony Conran, emerging as a significant figure of this new generation of Anglophone writers sharing a conscious cause with Welsh-language writers, still (albeit sympathetically) takes Dylan Thomas and his contemporaries of that preceding generation to task over their literary solipsism and aestheticism.[12] The lack of communal consciousness is a problem for the new generation of Welsh writers using the English language. In fact others (Bobi Jones, for example) take a more ardent stance and abandon the English language entirely for the sake of *Yr Hen Iaith.* As a consequence of this reinvigorated ardency the English language arm of the *Yr Academi Gymraeg* (The Academy of Welsh writing that was established in 1959) did not come into being until 1968, and then only after much controversy. The reluctance to accept the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers is not so far removed from 1939, when Saunders Lewis published his controversial essay, 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature?'[13] There he denied the 'Anglo-Welsh' authenticity and set the prevailing tone for future discourse, thus defining the boundaries of literary Wales for thirty years, and beyond. Rigid expectations of re-education in the Welsh language were certainly expected of writers keen to retain their hyphenated status.[14] It is important to note that it was for an early session of the Welsh Academy that Jones originally composed much of what was later to become the 'Autobiography' chapter of *The Dragon Has Two Tongues.* It is sufficient to say that the climate to which Jones's text belongs is one in which negotiations between the two Wales were open. The attempt to overcome internal cultural boundaries and tentatively encourage a rewriting of the Welsh contemporary mythology to

accommodate this shift in perception, was in process. The 'Autobiography' of *The Dragon has Two Tongues* can thus be read as recasting a moment of cultural convergence; a moment too when embryonic developments in Jones's earlier creative work suddenly emerge in a more developed form; a moment when the biblically informed cultural typology of modern (twentieth-century) Welsh-language literature can be seen to be mobilised by Jones to help clarify the 'Anglo-Welsh' dilemma, and to enable him publicly to explore his own position regarding the Welsh language.

As is evident from the tropes of Jones's later poem *Seven Keys to Shaderdom* discussed above, the model of Wales that he constructs in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* is one that is subtly echoed and reiterated throughout his creative work. Interestingly, even the early poetry and short stories can be seen to foreshadow his preoccupation with heritage, broken relations, and crises of belonging. Notably the stories 'The Wanderer', 'Price-Parry', and even 'I was born in the Ystrad Valley' bear the faint yet insistent imprint of division and the resulting search for reconciliation that is the primary concern of *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, and when it comes to considering his own life experiences, echoes of the creative motifs that shape his story-telling become more insistent. I am thinking primarily of the use of the 'Prodigal Son' as a device through which to unfold the progression of his relationship with the language and heritage of 'Welsh Wales'. It is his relationship with the former that Jones uses to frame the re-imagining of his own life story in the text and his account is structured around the loss and the regaining of the language. His 'story', in the 'Autobiography', begins and ends with the relevance of his mother tongue, and so subtly entwined within the contemporary issues of the language is this autobiographical material that it begins to take shape as a type of modern parable.

Jones's own life becomes a version of the returning prodigal and it is a 'story' that is offered as representative of the experience of many other Welsh people who also misplaced their original language. However, as Jones admits, his life is not necessarily characteristic of the leading 'Anglo-Welsh' writers of his own generation.[15] The loss of the language may well be common to all, but the reclamation of that loss is not typical.

'The Wanderer' (CS, 110-8), the short story first published in 1943, is an invaluable lens through which to refract the model of exile and repatriation with which Jones re-imagines his own formative years before 1930. This highly abstract modern reworking of the trope of 'The Prodigal Son' seems at first sight to offer little opportunity for negotiation with the Welsh-language tradition. Ostensibly there is little here that appears to engage directly with anything other than the universal plight of modern man stranded in the moment and divorced from his history. However, in Wales this universal predicament can be neither culturally innocent nor politically neutral. The division between an idealised utopian rural Eden and a grotesquely dystopian corrupted city slum is one that necessarily calls to mind the schism between Anglo- and Welsh Wales. It is this radical culture shift that is therefore precisely what *must* be read in the sub-text of this story, and that such a sub-text exists in a primarily modernist, aesthetic and experimental text is extremely significant when one considers that only four years earlier, in 1939, Saunders Lewis had taken Jones's Anglo-Welsh generation to task for being neither Welsh nor engaged with the Welsh tradition.[16] Jones would have undoubtedly read Lewis's scathing rebuttal of the grounds for Anglo-Welsh existence, and there is sufficient reason to place this short story in dialogue with Lewis and the other critics who followed his lead.

In 1943 Jones was certainly aware of and concerned with the divided state of Wales and specifically with Saunders Lewis's reading of that situation. In the notes to the autobiography, Tony Brown writes

> in 1931...GJ attended a course of evening classes taught by Saunders Lewis, which included the study of W.J.Gruffydd's recent *Y Flodeugerdd Gymraeg* (The Welsh Anthology, 1931). GJ's notebook for the course shows him making careful notes of the various forms of *Cynghanedd.* By the mid-30's he was translating from Welsh poetry. (*DTT*, 200)

This is no idle flirtation with his Welsh heritage. Such exposure to Welsh poetry would have familiarised Jones with the biblical metaphors so often used by contemporary Welsh-language writers to construct the myth of modern Wales. That Jones would have received a politically impassioned, to some biased, version of Welsh literature is almost certain. One could imagine that he would have left his evening classes as he would have left a revivalist meeting, profoundly stirred and 'religiously' pensive. If the poetry roused him to the extent revealed in *The Dragon has Two Tongues,* meeting it directly from the lips of Saunders Lewis cannot but have exacerbated his response to Wales as a biblical world lost to all but the Welsh speakers.

In 'The Wanderer' the familiar romanticising of a barely disguised West Wales as a biblically innocent and secure haven, the memory of which the exiled 'son' is tormented by as he suffers in the grotesque chaos of the diseased and corrupted sea-slum, is certainly evocative of well used Welsh tropes:

> 'Over the sea are the silver doves', he said beginning to weep, 'golden-eyed, crowned in the branched and blossomed purple of the trees...over the sea are all the virtues and the tender people; the sighs of my heart float over the sea to my father, the remembrance of whose love is in my heart every minute of the day.' (*CS*, 110)

Significantly, these lines echo those of T. Gwynn Jones's celebrated passage about *Afallon* in the poem '*Ymadawiad Arthur*'. Tony Conran's translation reads:

> Over the waves there's a gracious country,
> Nor in that land lingers lamentation;
> Whoever comes there, no old age or pestilence
> Strikes down, for the clean breeze of freedom
> Keeps every heart of us nimble and merry,
> As the Isle of Afallon itself is so. [17]

To converse so directly with the poem that came to symbolise the reclamation of the Welsh language from the linguistic 'corruptions' accrued throughout the nineteenth century, is indicative of Jones's own commitment to his heritage. His desire to return to the Welsh language and rectify his exiled status is thus here subtly revealed in a manner which anticipates the more assured exploration of his cultural identity in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*. Jones's literary Eden or '*Afallon*' is heavily stylised, finely wrought, but then he is engaging experimentally with a Welsh discourse, which, one could argue, is still alien to him. The filigreed language is festooned with

hiraeth. That the story's language and literary tools are English should not detract from the fact that this is a piece of writing that is genuinely straddling two literary discourses and anticipating some kind of reparative gesture. The inhabitation by Welsh metaphors, the ornate language that could equally be traced to Dafydd ap Gwilym as any English writer, the attempt to suggest the alliterative and assonant processes of *cynghanedd,* all indicate more than a cursory nod to the Welsh-language tradition.

Examples of the use of biblical tropes by Welsh-language writers as a method of understanding the situation of their nation and indeed for fuelling the nationalist cause are too abundant to consider extensively in this chapter. The parallels between the historical predicaments of the Jews, the Hebrew language, perceived to be so close to that given to man by God before Babel, and the diminishing and increasingly scattered Welsh nation can receive only a cursory salute here. Suffice to say that the rubric of the bible and the non-conformist pulpit is so inscribed in the Welsh-language literature that many biblical stories and myths breathe a vital and prophetic life into the literary construction of modern Wales. The adoption of a characteristic trope can be one of the easiest and most seamless means of entering an apparently closed discourse. Jones frequently uses tropes that are common in Welsh-language literature, and he does so in a manner that is often ideologically aligned with that discourse. Unlike Dylan Thomas and Caradoc Evans, who inhabit and distort the Welsh discourse to openly subvert and expose its tropes, and deliberately court controversy, Jones's allusions are more complex, his criticism is more subtle, his attitude more uncommitted. He desires understanding and unity in a way that his two (in)famous contemporaries do not. Even the short story 'Price- Parry' (*CS*, 161-172),

potentially offensive in its exaggerated parody of Welsh pride, is handled with tact and couched in a fairy-tale structure with a happy ending for all. That Jones is himself similarly connected to by Price-Parry's puritanical religious heritage only supports the argument of the 'Autobiography' that Welsh radical non-conformity is a cultural characteristic that can cross linguistic barriers of Wales with ease and with profundity.

To reiterate, it is the consideration of a Welsh Eden and the notion of exiled sons and prodigals that is particularly pertinent for the location of Jones's work within a wider Welsh tradition than the 'Anglo-Welsh' appellation often accounts for. A divided estate, a loyal son and a wandering wayward wastrel who turns his back on the father and his home and who ultimately returns with a bowed head. For those of certain, influential, ideological persuasion it is difficult not to see the shape of Wales in this saga, and Cynan certainly did when he wrote his poem 'Mab y Bwthyn' ('Son of the Cottage') in 1921. He views the prodigal as a young man gone to war and waylaid by the entrancing world he experiences at the expense of his home. The guilt and shame that this perceived betrayal induces is that of the Prodigal who realises the bright lights and momentary pleasures are unsatisfactory compared to the memory of his true and steadfast home. The lurid contrast that Cynan establishes between the raucous, carnal and depraved city and the purity and naturality of the home he left behind is exactly that which Jones utilises with greater abstraction and violence in his short story 'The Wanderer'. Two excerpts from a translation of Cynan's poem by Sally Roberts Jones read:

Paupers we were, without seeing we were poor,

Souls having died dwelt still in carnal form,

Girls in the inferno dancing through the night,

For all the rose and lily that made their hair so bright[18]

Slopes of heather! Slopes of heather!

Where there is life, not hollow matter.

Men in that place are clean and strong,

Their days as sweet as notes of song.

Women there are pure and serene,

There children free from lust and pain.[19]

Such Saturnalian images of the city are those propounded by the Calvinistic rhetoric of hell and damnation. The recollection of the distant home as a romantic pastoral Eden typically characterises constructions of Welsh Wales especially since T. Gwynn Jones's Celtic Revivalist poem 'Argoed'.[20] This classic antithesis of city and rural life mimicking hell and heaven is an age-old device but, as has been noted, it is one that is utilised within Wales not merely to denote the innocence and integrity of the countryside and the old ways, but also to provide a subtle form through which to understand and delineate the schism between the two cultures of Wales. The trope is integral to the modern Welsh mythology with which Jones engages on a number of occasions in his early work. The guilt and shame that for Cynan's son simply resides in the fact that he has been tempted into another world, is more complex for the Anglo-Welsh writer such as Jones who was born into that world through no fault of his own. However, the guilt of Cynan's prodigal is akin to the shame that Jones reveals himself to have experienced when he came once again into the presence of the

living Welsh language, significantly through the chapel in Cardiff ('their knowledge and understanding and their devotion to Wales, shamed me'[*DTT*, 34]). It is also the guilt and shame of the scarecrow son as he realises his situation and his past losses in 'The Wanderer' ('a grown man in his guilt' [*CS*, 113]).

Welsh Wales thus becomes symbolic of a biblical homeland, and the Anglo-Welsh the lost children of unity. It is for the upholders of this ideal 'homeland' that Jones originally prepared what he terms in the preface as his 'Welsh Apologia'; ostensibly the original paper from which the autobiographical chapter of *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* is derived. Jones's choice to engage with this penetrating religious trope merely emphasises his involvement with both cultures. He, and his fellow exiles, are implicated whether they accept it or not in the two literary languages of Wales. By accepting the Welsh-language myth of Wales as constituting a broken Eden struggling to recover its lost linguistic and cultural integrity, Jones is engaging positively with the discourse of the mother tongue and thus performing exactly what the early and contemporary critics demand of him. He is stitching the Anglo-Welsh narrative into the fabric of the contemporaneous Welsh language mythology which is also concerned with biblically conceived losses. This is arguably the most vital act of myth building and story telling that Jones performs in this Autobiography. It is subtler than the historical riveting he undertakes in the consideration of his family tree. It is inscribed in the language he chooses to use rather than rhetorically constructed through a logical interpretation of history. This emanation of his own prodigal return to his heritage is more difficult to deconstruct and discredit, so entwined is the metaphor in the meshes of linguistic association.

I cannot help but see 'The Wanderer', a hauntingly beautiful prose poem in which a typically isolated individual struggles against his existence in the fragmented, hostile city to regain the coherence of a lost memory, as one of the most under-appreciated instances of Welsh Modernism. And I do not use the term Welsh idly. The text truly engages with the two states of Wales at a time when writers were accused of not exploring beyond the boundaries that defined the nation. It engages with the prevalent cultural myths inscribed in the Welsh language poetry of the time: the romantic privileging of the mother culture, and the relegating of the English in Wales to the position of dangerous interloper blatantly placing the two states into a hierarchy. And it does this twenty years before the reconciliatory narrative of *The Dragon has Two Tongues* was imagined.

In *The Welsh Extremist* Ned Thomas writes:

> Wherever you look in the modern Welsh culture you find the word 'remember'. It is there in Gwenallt and Saunders Lewis and in the songs of Dafydd Iwan...This is not an antiquarian sort of remembering; it is remembering who you are, where you come from, what has happened to you and your people. [21]

Unsurprisingly, it is also there in 'The Wanderer'. The exiled son is haunted to distraction by memories of his childhood home. They seep into his sleep and set the rhythms of his disturbed mind. He is 'homesick for the remembering fields of his innocent country (*CS*, 113)'; 'he remembered his father's headland house (110)'; 'he remembered at night, with welcome footsteps at the door, how he watched the glow

of the kitchen fire (*CS*, 111)'; and 'he remembered himself, the child with the golden hair, who hearing the ferry bell, ran through sunlit flowers and silver seed...he saw forgotten the homely tongue that warned how the world cheesed her traps (*CS*, 112)'. These memories are sufficient to drive the 'son' to suicide, precisely because he has lost a sense of who he is, of where he is from and of that knowledge which comes from living in an old settled community. It is difficult not to trace the mythical shadow of 'Argoed' behind this work. The 'homely tongue' could be read as the Welsh language (T. Gwynn Jones wrote, 'words, for truth's sake chosen by the wise'[22]), the 'harp' shaped gardens in the second paragraph is playfully suggestive, and the darkly uttered statement closing the third paragraph is virtually an oblique answer to Saunders Lewis' rejection of the Anglo-Welsh:

> The birds shall pop through my skeleton before I return unsummoned for the pollution of my native land (*CS*, 110).

Pride intervenes and determines that the return must be one of invitation, not spontaneity. The strange and jarring use of 'pollution', which seems to contradict the earlier idealised images of security and purity in his 'native land', betrays an antagonism that is out of place and rather more consistent with a partially disguised resentment that erupts unbidden. Something 'other' has emerged through the language, and deconstructs the ostensible meaning of the 'myth' of the returning prodigal.

In 'Autobiography' Jones recounts his first 'exile' as one which occurs organically, and yet it is to prove the most profound for the purposes of this book. It

involves the gradual separation of the child he was from his mother tongue. As he describes it, it happened reluctantly for his parents, and one could argue that choice for Jones himself was limited. It is an ostracism he is not conscious of until later, a loss he is not aware of having incurred until adulthood:

> English, by the time that I was five, was the language of most of our Merthyr neighbours, and gradually, under pressure, my parents began in time to use the *lingua franca* of the surrounding areas (*DTT*, 23)

How far Jones accepts a personal responsibility for loss of the language is interesting. How far he perceives himself to have had a personal 'choice' is not entirely explored by his text. Rather it suits the purposes of his cultural stance to convey the slip from the mother tongue into the English language as one which occurred naturally around the Welsh culture and without any violence of separation from it. There is certainly not the level of self-recrimination with which, say, Gwyneth Lewis explores the betrayal of the language in *Keeping Mum*[23] thirty years later. How far Jones recognises the psychological trauma of language loss is not consciously explored in *The Dragon has Two Tongues*. Neither is his exile as unpleasant as would usually be presumed. It is one in which riches are bestowed via Romantic poetry and his idyllic experiences in the natural world of the Brecon Beacons. The registering of displacement for Jones occurs much later and belongs to the period he spent outside Wales at teacher training college in Cheltenham where it was 'cold and alien' and which was 'always a place of hiraeth' (*DTT*, 27). That even then he experiences no internal alienation from 'Wales' is vital to the manner in which he naturalises the Anglo-Welsh writer within the discourse of Wales as a whole. However, when he

comes to describe his reunion with his Welsh heritage in the final pages of this autobiographical chapter it becomes evident that a form of exile *has* been rectified. He writes of his shame and implies a guilt that undermines his earlier unapologetic stance:

> I began in time to find it intolerable that I should be a Welshman living in Wales, and yet ignorant of my Welsh heritage, the first in a seemingly endless family descent who was unable to speak the language of my ancestors, and so excluded from the Welsh community (*DTT*, 34)

At the same time as he admits the cultural breech, he is also undermining its impact by placing himself as only the 'first in a seemingly endless family descent'. This suggests that any cultural damage incurred cannot be that profound, as he is only of the first generation to have mislaid his linguistic legacy.

It is no accident that Jones chooses to structure his own life in a manner which echoes the form of the biblical parable. One can certainly recognise the deprivation he witnessed in Cardiff in the morally parched and physically corrupted poverty that defines the 'son's' existence. However, when one reads that parable alongside his own 'myth' of the 'Anglo-Welsh' it becomes clear that Jones believes that he was only ever a linguistic 'prodigal', severed from the language, not from the culture. This provides a measure against which all other Anglo-Welsh writers can be judged, although not all such writers of his generation experienced the sudden pull of epiphany regarding the legacy of Welsh language literature. To use another biblical trope, Jones himself is struck down like Saul when he first reads the poetry of the

cywyddwyr (the strict metre poets of the Middle Ages) and realises than an entire literature has been obscured for him by what he perceives to be an accident of circumstance:

> This series was a revelation to me, and I read some of the volumes in a blaze of glory. Also not without a sense of resentment (*DTT*, 35)

He repeatedly figures himself as one who has been unwittingly rather than deliberately in the dark, but never absolves himself of the responsibility of silence. Unlike Jones, Luke's New Testament prodigal son makes a choice to leave but struggles to return when he realises his error. Jones and his contemporaries, the product, as he so insistently maintains, of the early twentieth-century political push towards Anglicised grammar school education, are unfortunate prodigals, who have strayed because of the pressures of culture rather than any real rebelliousness against their mother tongue. On these grounds he maintains it is unfair to condemn them as conscious or deliberate exiles. In the last lines of the 'Autobiography', Jones further confounds this notion of the 'prodigal son', demonstrating both his willingness, on one level, to shape his life within the confines of such a return, and yet his reluctance to admit that he ever had a choice:

> I, and those Anglo-Welsh writers brought up in circumstances similar to mine certainly did not reject the Welsh language.
>
> On the contrary the Welsh language rejected us. This is true even of those of us who are deeply conscious of and love our Welsh heritage. (*DTT*, 36)

Jones writes that 'the Welsh language rejected us'. This is a cryptic statement, and one that could be read as a veiled comment not about the language per se, but those who politically upheld it. For figures such as Saunders Lewis *did* reject the 'Anglo-Welsh' on behalf of the language. They were still being implicitly 'rejected' at the time of writing by the anxious shift towards the Welsh language that was becoming increasingly institutionalised to compensate for its rapid demise.[24] In fact any understanding of what is meant by the 'language' in the twentieth century cannot be separated from the shadows of its literary custodians. This accusatory 'rejection' reverberates with the echo of the passage from 'The Wanderer' (quoted above), in which the native land becomes the seat of an equally cryptic and incongruous 'pollution' to which the son will not return 'unsummoned'. However, on a more literary level, it is also apparent that the 'language' itself is capable of rejecting those who are not organically familiar with its nuances and idioms. Jones notes his inability to write in Welsh despite his return, because it is not sufficiently embedded within his unconscious mind to intuitively create authentic expression. It is ironic that in claiming that the 'Welsh language rejected' the 'Anglo-Welsh', Jones can be seen to be deploying the familiar Welsh habit of personifying the language, in order to poetically endow it with a tangible spiritual and even physical form. One is drawn to Waldo Williams's poetry to establish a point of comparison. In 'Cymru a Chymraeg' (translated by Tony Conran[25]) the language is 'she', 'danger's daughter', 'full of mischief'. The Welsh language is untamed, a wild force of nature as un-containable as the Welsh mountains. That Jones demonstrates a profound knowledge of the Welsh language literary tradition at the same time as explaining that he is not equipped to be a part of it, is inherently paradoxical and inherently interesting. There is a faint

recrimination in the tenor of this passage that bubbles beneath the polite veneer. What the loss of the language symbolizes to the nation as a whole is monumentally shadowed by an equally penetrating irremediable sense of personal loss. That this arouses a certain antagonism in Jones towards the keepers of the Welsh language he loves so much is scarcely disguised. The sense that there is little else he can do as an 'Anglo-Welsh' writer to justify his 'Welsh-ness' is evident. The custodians of 'Danger's daughter' are as 'fickle' as the language and spurn those like Jones who cannot fully express her intricacies and her 'mischief'. Bi-lingualism increasingly becomes untenable in a climate that seeks to preserve Welsh at all costs. The entire weight of contemporary bi-cultural disagreement and suspicion activates this passage, which is compounded by the frustrated and bitter grief of an individual who has done all he can to rectify his supposedly prodigal status but found that it may not be enough. He may always be situated on the outside, manifesting the face of the disconcerting other.

This has considerable implications for the parable he has been so hopefully unfolding. Arguably, the father's unconditional forgiveness of the prodigal is an ideal that cannot be extended to the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers without a considerable shift in attitude towards the language. As much as all sides would perhaps like the mould of the prodigal to adequately explain the situation in Wales, it clearly does not fit as ideally as all would perhaps hope. Jones has revealed how the ideology / myth does not sufficiently contain the real situation, yet it seems to be the only myth there is. Jones has sculpted his life to mimic the form of 'The Prodigal', but there are many instances in which he clearly exposes a life that fails to adequately reflect this model. The idea of the unconditional return of the prodigal son (ostensibly an ideological

admission of guilt and responsibility), so vital for the integrity of the language, is one which Jones may be able to idealise, but in reality is more complex. *The Dragon has two Tongues* is a window through which one can observe what happens when myth and ideals collide with the 'incorrigible plurality' of reality.

The call for and the need for a new narrative to explain Wales and to accommodate the 'Anglo-Welsh' on their own terms, as much as on those of the *Academi*, is evident in the final paragraph. The last few sentences of 'Auto-biography' leaves the discussion poised upon the cusp of the Welsh dilemma: whether it is and should be enough that the Welsh writers in English write about Wales and its people, or whether the language choice is itself too detrimental to Wales and its future to be condoned. It is to this end that Jones worked so hard altering the historical narrative and re-writing the 'myth' in the first half of the 'Autobiography' to propose that the exile never really occurred except in a very recent linguistic manner. Jones offers another definition of 'Welshness' that does not attempt to transcend the vital nature of the language, but to limit the current understanding of the damage that has been done to it. By proposing that the tradition of the creative radical Non-Conformist culture can be sustained beyond the linguistic boundaries between Welsh and English, he is able to suggest that there is still hope for unity. One generation of severe linguistic corruption cannot possibly cause irrevocable damage. However, Jones and his contemporaries are that generation, and as such are potentially under threat of sacrifice at the altar of Welsh unity.

Jones's 'Anglo-Welsh' myth is historically located in the eighteenth century, and juxtaposed with that of the Welsh-language tradition which reaches beyond that period to construct a more ancient origin myth. Despite attempts to introduce a very

plausible cultural continuity, it is always the fundamental issue of the language itself that compels any attempt at reconciliation to enter the realm of paradox. It is this I think that Jones half recognises in the final paragraph of 'Autobiography'. He is happy to create in English and feels authentically Welsh himself, but is aware that within the confines of 'Welshness' defined by Welsh he will always be something of a 'scarecrow' living amongst the monstrous rather than the virtuous. However, one could also read this final paragraph as Jones's delivery of an arrow: the laying down of a challenge for the Welsh *Academi* to meet: accept us as we are:

> I, and those Anglo-Welsh writers brought up in circumstances similar to mine, certainly did not reject the Welsh language. On the contrary, the Welsh language rejected us. This is true even of those of us who are deeply conscious of and love our Welsh heritage. (*DTT, 36*)

Whilst the points of literary convergence are considerable, the two cultures of Wales are still poised in the potential act of deconstructing each other. One myth or story seems to necessarily undermine the validity of the other, often merely by the very fact of the language difference. At this point in time unity cannot be achieved because the cultures are essentially contradictory. The understandable Welsh privileging of the language necessarily confounds any claims of cultural kinship from the Welsh people using the English language. The distinctly cultural shape of Wales ultimately renders any system or external apparatus of coherence inadequate. Even post-colonial theory is useful only up to a certain point, as similar inherent fundamental ambiguities[26] can still render the logic of the whole theoretical stance

meaningless. Wales resists theory as implacably as the language resists its own demise.

That Jones is aware of the cultural complexity and idiosyncrasy both of Wales and his own position within it, is again revealed earlier in his creative career. In 1944, a year after the publication of 'The Wanderer', he published another short story called 'Price-Parry', which, I believe, also metaphorically engages with the state of Wales. However, it does so in a startlingly contradictory manner. Gone are the 'silver doves' and the vision of a utopian homeland lingering over the sea. This story is concerned to reveal the empty isolation that is incurred not through exile but within the very community which, in 'The Wanderer', the Scarecrow remembered and to which he desired to return. This story parodies the Welsh obsession with pedigree and lineage to expose just how such a cleaving towards purity and historical integrity can impact upon living Wales in the moment. In a less sympathetic representation of tradition, Price-Parry is made into a clergyman whose sole joy is the elaborately designed family tree he keeps in his parlour:

> Near the bottom of the thick frame Geta saw a stiff man very much like the vicar lying on the ground wearing an overcoat but no trousers....(*CS*, 164)

The tree itself mocks the ridiculous but influential patrician figure. Why does he wear only an overcoat? A 'stiff' half naked man from which a tree uncomfortably emerges is viciously grotesque, and sexually sterile: this seems to undermine the whole notion of a fertile family tree: a dead man cannot perpetuate it, and it becomes monumental. The juxtaposition that Jones uses to construct an idea of Wales is not that represented

by two distinct places, but by two distinct character 'types' who, because of Price-Parry's obsession with his own heritage are socially and humanly incompatible. These types are represented by Price-Parry himself, the inheritor of a 'pure' ancestry, and his morally corrupt parishioners over whom he presides in superiority, but who are in fact bastards descended from the same family. The ideal of a pure and verdant homeland invoked in 'The Wanderer' is frozen in 'Price-Parry'. It has become a sepulchre, a monument to the past that freezes the breath of the present. To the detriment of all else, Price-Parry derives pleasure from the knowledge that his pedigree is perfectly pure, and the pride in his dead ancestry results in the neglect of those impoverished and vice-ridden people who live within his immediate proximity and indeed within the parish he is supposed to serve. He is a cold and authoritative figure whose uncompromising principles dominate the landscape in which he lives:

> And when the whole land was lighted another orb rose in counter arrogance to the west of the village, as majestic and domineering as the first, and almost as all-seeing; it too exalted itself and looked out in rival possessiveness and mastery over the snow clad scene. It was the blue eye, cold and blue as ice water, of the Reverend Roderick Pari Pryce Price-Parry, son of the sons of Rhodri Fawr, Vicar of Llanifor Fechan (*CS*, 161)

An *other* 'orb' rising 'in counter arrogance', 'majestic', 'domineering', an 'all-seeing' eye that offers a 'rival possessiveness' over the landscape to that of the sun. Perhaps one really should read this as a universal criticism of man's desire to 'master' his environment rather than particularise its significance more locally. Perhaps it is a little too misleading to perceive the shadow of the proud, unyielding Welsh-language

establishment in this exploration of how the desire to preserve the purity of a heritage can only petrify both the individual and a community. Perhaps it is also a little far fetched and presumptuous to see the silhouette of Saunders Lewis himself in the Reverend Roderick Pari Pryce Price-Parry. However, I do believe that these stories are more involved in their contemporary cultural moment than they may initially appear. Mati Tŷ-Unnos exposes the conservatism and elitism of Price-Parry:

> It is a pity you haven't got a photo of your Uncle Roderick on your old tree, getting out of his carriage to throw my Grandfather and all us children out of Parcau Bach on to the road, the endless tyrant. (*CS*, 169)

The silences of Price-Parry's tree concerning the working classes, is comparable to the silences of any conservative reading of history that sidelines the working people. The anti-conservatism and socialism that this passage betrays would indubitably conflict with the notions of Saunders Lewis, who based his pedigree of Welsh literature upon the retrieval of the aristocratic systems of medieval Wales and used this to fuel his own construction or 'myth' of the Welsh nation.[27]

There is something inherently narcissistic about Price-Parry's introverted obsession with his pedigree, and if we do read the character within the rubric not simply of the cultural moment but also that of Jones's own particular location within it, the story becomes significantly damning and intrinsically suggestive. Of the two stories considered, the influence of Caradoc Evans's can be seen to be considerably more vibrant in the latter. The parody of this reverend figure, the exposure of false morality, of pride and of an egotistical ferocity towards fellow human beings all

resonate with the echo of Evans. This influence alone is significant, because just as it would be impossible for Jones to be writing without a knowledge of Saunders Lewis's stance regarding the 'Anglo-Welsh', it would also be impossible for him not to be aware exactly how culturally charged an open imitation of Caradoc Evans' satires could still be in the Wales of the 1940s. Where Jones parts company with Caradoc Evans is that he leavens his satire with humility and humanity, with forgiveness and with light and pertinently for this thesis, with the possibility of unconditional redemption and return. M. Wynn Thomas writes of Dylan Thomas's poem 'After the Funeral'[28] that it 'is the poet's reply to the world view of the non-conformist preacher'.[29] A comparable stance could be adopted to illuminate the themes of 'Price-Parry'; however there is clearly more at stake here than what Tony Conran has also referred to as a characteristic modernist reaction against the Welsh *Buchedd.*[30] Jones is concerned with a cultural metaphor that seems to utilise the familiar religious iconoclasm as vehicle for something more subversive. Through its concern with pedigree, ancestry and family trees, this story offers an archetypal trope that can be used to understand many levels of Welsh literary, linguistic and cultural conflict. Specifically, for Jones, it is profoundly implicated by the politics of 'Anglo-Welsh' positioning.

The revelation that is provoked by the visit of Mati Tŷ-unnos's ghost after Price-Parry has grudgingly and judgementally buried her, could be compared to the vision which closes *The Valley, the City, the Village*, in which a similarly aged and hard worked woman (Trystan's Grandmother) judges the living from beyond the grave. These apocalyptic moments of sudden and acute vision are common in Jones's work. The scarecrow son ('The Wanderer') is tormented by the unbearably brilliant

realisation of what he has lost; Jones recounts his own vibrant and consuming illumination on first reading Welsh-language literature. These moments are always accompanied by light of such incandescence it could only be sourced from the bible. It is the light of God, of Christ, of the burning bush, the light that blinded Saul with its judgement on the road to Damascus. Jones uses this biblical motif to signify the existence of borders and of thresholds that must or could be crossed, of ruptures that must be repaired. These borders are both internal and external, both psychological and cultural. Jones's Christian faith means that for him the longing for unity is as pervasive as that desired by the upholder of Welsh-language culture. However, it is a unity of spirit he seeks, and not necessarily of 'high' culture. What is particularly interesting in this story is that the role of the prodigal is reversed. It is Price-Parry, the patrician vicar, who must repent and return. He is exiled from his living family because of his obsession with his ancestry and his unrelenting morality that forces him to disregard his 'sisters', Mati and Geta.

When Mati's ghost reveals that she and Geta are also descendents of the great Rhodri Fawr, and judges his pride from beyond the grave, Price-Parry is transfigured:

> Why was he laughing and sitting up here beside her with his arm around her, when like a mangy king, as Mati called him, he always wanted to be led about (*CS*, 169)

The transformation is immediate. All the complexities of human difference have been reduced by this simple vision. If the decision had been unfolded without the intervention of the spiritual world, he could easily have ignored their claims to his

inheritance and thus have protected the purity and integrity of the tree he places so much store in. Instead, he is transformed by humility and accepts their claim and allows the diluting touch of a real family to brighten his cold and lonely world. Jones could be holding a mirror up to reveal an image, if distorted, of the contemporary Welsh dilemma. That Price-Parry chooses to sacrifice the integrity of his family tree significantly anticipates Jones's later concern with unity and forgiveness that he explores in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*.

This is truly the stuff that fairy tales and indeed morality tales are made of. The tale would be didactic if it were not for the irrepressible and grotesque humour that suffuses it. The parallels with the contemporary Welsh condition are so blatant that they barely require any explication. However, the implication of a man lacking forgiveness and humanity representing Welsh Wales is as potent as any made by Caradoc Evans or Dylan Thomas. That the burning of his tree, and also of the books that refer to it, could ethically be the right thing to do is quite one of the most culturally contentious acts of Jones's work. And that the Christian unity of a people is more desirable than the divisive purity of an essentialist heritage is a point that has considerable relevance: the strains that shape this story are therefore also those that haunt Jones's interpretation of his life. The impression of Welsh Wales that Jones gives here is one of arrogance, of preciousness even to the point of selfishness, of preferring the perfect yet empty idea to the imperfect reality. The tone of this tale, proposing compromise rather than unconditional 'Anglo-Welsh' return, and in fact challenging the very direction and nature of that return, is so different to that of 'The Wanderer' that it cannot but reveal Jones to be uncertain exactly how to position himself in relation to Welsh culture and to that Welsh language heritage that he is still

in the process of rediscovering. On the one hand there is the artist who is transfigured, blinded by the beauty of Welsh tradition, and on the other is the artist who is consummately aware that his work belongs to English and who has been equally transfigured by the beauty of Romantic poetry, and that at a more impressionable age. How to reconcile these two positions, and which of the two is to blame for the lack of Welsh unity, is the dilemma at the heart of much of Jones's work, most particularly *The Dragon has Two Tongues*.

The disparity between the stances of these two early stories reveals the difficulty Jones had situating himself comfortably between Welsh-language Wales and his 'Anglo-Welsh' allegiances. The early story of *hiraeth* and remembrance is an idealised rendition of the prodigal return, whilst the subsequent tale seems increasingly critical of Welsh-language puritanism. Whilst both stories are obsessively concerned with reunion, the healing of divisions, and the transgression of personal and cultural boundaries, the location of responsibility is not consistent. Jones struggled to align his allegiance to both his Welsh heritage and his role as an emergent Anglo-Welsh writer. This is evident in a considerable body of his work, and these tensions are pertinently addressed and very subtly evident in *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* It is precisely this discomfort that appears to fuel the desire to formulate an origin myth for the Anglo-Welsh. It is what makes the motif of the prodigal superficially so alluring. All the uncertainties and struggles that defined his early writing years nourished the need to provide and justify a coherent place for the 'Anglo-Welsh' within the Welsh tradition. However, whilst Jones is able to construct a coherent story from his temporally divorced family history, and one which aligns itself easily with a more universal form of communal myth, he is unable to achieve

anything comparable with his own life. His attempt to understand his own life through a similar archetypical structure (figured by the prodigal) collapses under the weight of psychological and cultural complexities and this is the inevitable result of trying to contain lived personal experiences in an abstract motif. Such theorising shatters immediately it comes into contact with experience. Paradoxically, however, in spite of this, the Welsh legacy Jones takes such care to establish a claim for does reveal itself naturally in the early stories and in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues* through the imagery and structures he chooses to use. If Jones is not, as I have supposed, conscious of how he interacts with, and manifests, the tropes, the poetry, and the figures of Welsh-language discourse in his own work, then given the fact that they are strikingly evident, it would not be beyond reason to concede that he intuits them. If such an intuition exists, then this would surely be a fierce reiteration of his own implied stance, that in the exchange between two languages, in a cultural and industrial crucible, such as Merthyr, something approximating pure *could* have been orally retained in English, via its direct contact with the vibrantly living Welsh language.

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[1]See 'Myth,' *Oxford Dictionaries,* April 2010. Oxford Dictionaries. April 2010. Oxford University Press. 15 December 2010.
http://oxforddictionaries.com/view/entry/m_en_gb0545790#m_en_gb0545790
I reluctantly cite the online definition as the entry for 'myth' in the published OED (below) does not accommodate the contemporary accepted meaning that I wish to utilise in this essay. It does not define the term beyond being 'fictitious', thus not accommodating the more ambiguous connotations that are in accepted circulation. For example, the idea that myth could be an inherent product of historical interpretation (i.e. an 'exaggerated' truth) is not sanctioned by the 1989 edition. See John Simpson and Edmund Weiner eds., 'myth', *The Oxford English Dictionary*, Vol. X (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) 177. 'A purely fictitious narrative usually involving supernatural persons, actions, or events, and embodying some popular idea concerning natural or historical phenomena'.

[2] For a wonderful account of Wales, which celebrates, yet exposes, this exact co-mingling of ancient myth and historical 'fact' that has created the idea of the 'impossible' nation of Wales, see Gwyn A. Williams, *When Was Wales?* (London: Penguin, 1985).

[3] There are so many apparently apolitical tropes in Jones's work that can be read in this way. Even the recurrent images of grotesque deformity and leprous, physical cancer and canker that seem to divide

Jones's characters in a comparable manner (see in particular the ruined hand of the workman in 'The Kiss' [*CS,* 48]), are actually code for a deeply embedded and infected cultural wound. 'He looked down again, trying hopelessly to discern in this raw stinking corruption perhaps the ridges of sinews, or even three divisions separating them from each other'. Looking for form in congealed flesh one can equally 'discern' the writer seeking coherent 'divisions' as references on the territory of Wales. As an aside, this use of physical deformity also raises questions of how far Jones is actually utilising the 'othering' tropes that the twentieth century Welsh-language tradition originated as signs for the alien, inhuman, industrialised and anglicised South Wales.

[4] The idea of people being trees, and trees signifying the nation recur throughout Jones's work. In 'The Eden Tree' the workman is "rooted...And he could feel down to the end of each of these roots, its [his body] gentle sucking at the hidden rains, and the terrible mouthing of a stone." Something fertile ('hidden rains') and something barren ('terrible mouthing of a stone') lying below the surface emerges through this metaphor: an 'other' Wales perhaps? Meic Stephens chooses the following comment to open the series of jottings that constitute 'What was before the Big Bang?', *New Welsh Review* No 39 (Winter 97-97) 40-2, 40.

> '**1982** Wales to me is like a tree, or rather a grove of trees, growing, dying, needing weeding out, protecting, caring for, but all the time with a life of its own; and all the trees in the grove are Welsh'.

Is Jones therefore a head gardener who prunes as much as he feeds through his literature? This vision certainly does not preclude the kind of rigorous routing of self-righteous purity that is to be considered through the reading of 'Price-Parry' (CS, 78).

[5] Glyn Jones, *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, ed. Tony Brown (Cardiff: UWP, 2001) 9.

[6] It is the central paradox of this work, that in attempting to reveal a coherent historical whole (if a little lumpy in outline), Jones essentially expresses a cultural plurality that cannot be contained by such a national ideal. The plurality of the text, the potentially disparate voices featured, is constantly in conflict with the argument for historical continuity that Jones is developing. The tensions so latent and taut in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* place a strain on the totality that threatens to fragment when placed under the pressure of questioning. In his attempt to come to terms with the two literatures of Wales, Jones anticipates the need for such a theory that is advanced by Bhabha in *The Location of Culture,* whilst still striving for the idealistic and practically impossible sense of national unity.

[7] Thomas Carlyle, *On Heroes, Hero-worship, and the Heroic in History* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1993) 73-4.

[8] Tony Conran trans. 'Cymru'n un', *The Peacemakers Waldo Williams* (Llandysul, Ceredigion: Gomer, 1997) 120-1.

[9] 'the problem is no longer one of tradition, of tracing a line, but one of division, of limits; it is no longer one of lasting foundations, but one of transformations that serve as new foundations, the rebuilding of foundations.' Michel Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002) 6.

[10] I have only been able to locate three copies (1957-8) of this journal in Swansea University Library. Its short-lived run is a testament, not only to the financial difficulties of running a small magazine at the time, but also to the lack of interest in its purpose ("To further interest in the Welsh Language and its culture"). That it was birthed into a contentious climate can only be emphasised by the strange statement that precedes the 'aims', that 'membership of "Welsh Unity" is confined to Welshmen whose first language is English. Others are welcome to subscribe to the magazine.' *Welsh Unity* No.1 (August 1957) 1.

[11] The 'Editorial' in *The Anglo-Welsh Review,* Vol. 12. No.29 dramatically announces its demise due to lack of funding, and then the 'editorial' of Vol. 13 no.31 less dramatically announces its continuation due to the receipt of funding from the Welsh Committee of the Arts Council.

[12] Tony Conran, 'The English Poet in Wales II: Boys of Summer in their Ruin', *Anglo-Welsh Review* Vol.10, No. 26 (1960).

[13] Saunders Lewis, *Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature*: being the annual lecture delivered to the branch on December 10th, 1938 (Caerdydd : Urdd Graddedigion Prifysgol Cymru, 1939).

[14] See Tony Conran, 'Anglo-Welsh Poetry Today: Part One', *Poetry Wales,* Vol. 4. No. 3. He claims that 'it is simply not enough to try and read Dafydd ap Gwilym. You have to read Sappho and Li Po, the hokku of Basho and Buson, Walt Whitman, Rimbaud, the Seven odes of ancient Arabia, the Troubadours, Dante's lyrics, Rilke...and then you might be in a position to start.' Glyn Jones's meticulous and extensive reading of Welsh-language literature from the 1930s onwards seems a paltry offering as the bar of entry to the echelons of Welsh Culture is raised once again. No wonder he is writing (and publishing) his unworthy praise poems to Taliesin ('You, Taliesin') and Dafydd ap

Gwilym ('Henffych, Dafydd') a short time later. Such idealistic, yet specific requirements, seem to indicate not simply a union of literatures but an equally subtle deepening of the divides.

[15] It would be interesting to assess whether Jones is overly harsh in judgement of his contemporaries, relationship with the Welsh literary tradition and the language. He criticises Idris Davies for not revealing his extensive knowledge of both in his English writing and he does not credit Dylan Thomas with any substantial knowledge of his heritage. Is this true, or is he judging his fellows by the standards demanded by the contemporary representatives of Welsh-language discourse?

[16] Saunders Lewis, "Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature: being the annual lecture delivered to the branch on December 10th, 1938" (Caerdydd : Urdd Graddedigion Prifysgol Cymru, 1939).

[17] Tony Conran, trans. T. Gwynn Jones, 'from *Arthur's Passing', Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003) 259.

[18] Sally Roberts Jones, trans. Cynan, 'The Prodigal Son' (excerpt from 'Mab y Bwthyn'), *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry,* eds. Menna Elfyn and John Rowlands (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2003) 88.

[19] Ibid. 89.

[20] Tony Conran, trans. T. Gwynn Jones, 'Argoed', *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry,* Eds. Menna Elfyn and John Rowlands (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books ltd. 2003) 31-36.

[21] Ned Thomas, *The Welsh Extremist* (Talybont, Dyfed: Y Lolfa, 1973, 1991) 72.

[22] Op. cit.

[23] Gwyneth Lewis, *Keeping Mum* (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Book Ltd, 2003).

[24] Take for example the demise of *The Welsh Review* and the previously mentioned failure of the magazine *Welsh Unity* as a mark of how little prioritised the understanding of Wales via the English language was at the time. Also see Gerald Morgan, 'The Future of the Welsh Language', *The Anglo-Welsh Review,* Vol.14 No. 34 (Winter 1964-5) 47-51. This is a 'pro-bilingualism' reply to Iorwerth Peate's extreme stance at Yr Academi Gymreig.

[25] Tony Conran, trans. *The Peacemakers: Waldo Williams* (Llandysul, Ceredigion: Gomer, 1997) 122-3.

[26] Colonial and Postcolonial theory have proved vital languages that facilitate the illumination of Welsh cultural divergences and the interpretation of Welsh literatures. However, the critical tools have not been used without acknowledged reservations. See Chris Williams, 'Problematizing Wales: An Exploration in Historiography and Postcoloniality', *Post-colonial Wales,* eds. Jane Aaron and Chris Williams (Cardiff: UWP, 2005). This essay sees Williams creating an 'ethically' acceptable space for Wales in 'Post-colonial' discourse by distinguishing it as 'Postcolonial' and shifting the timeline backwards to the 16th century in an attempt to create an 'ethically' acceptable space for Wales. However, there is always the danger that the theory will deconstruct itself because of the paradox referred to by Williams, that the colonised Welsh were also colonisers through their participatory role in the world wide implementation of Empire. When one appropriates the language created to account for the physically violent impact of Western mercantile Imperialism for a nation that was essentially party to that very process of colonisation then the paradox is certainly problematic. The meaning of the language and the structure of the theory must be destabilised as a consequence. And yet, in spite of this, few other critical languages exist which clarify the entire Welsh predicaments as richly as Post-colonialism. One cannot refute the power of the language to derive profound cultural meaning from Welsh texts. For an example of how intensely illuminating and fertile Post-colonial theory can be when applied to the singular situation of Wales, see Kirsti Bohata, *Post-colonialism Revisited* (Cardiff, UWP, 2004).

[27] See Saunders Lewis, 'The Tradition of Taliesin', 'The Essence of Welsh Literature', and 'Dafydd ap Gwilym', *Presenting Saunders Lewis,* eds. A. Jones and G. Thomas (Cardiff: UWP, 1983) 145-53, 155-8, 159-63.

[28] Dylan Thomas, 'After the Funeral', *Collected Poems,* eds. Davies, W. and Ralph Maud (London: Phoenix, 2004) 73.

[29] M.W.Thomas, *Corresponding Cultures* (Cardiff: UWP, 1999) 47.

[30] See Tony Conran, 'The Advent of Modernism', *Frontiers in Anglo-Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1997) 109-120.

Glyn Jones: Caught in the "Bloom-in" chains of Dylan Thomas

'Montaigne asks us to search within ourselves, to learn there "that our private wishes are for the most part born and nourished at the expense of others.'[1]

'And on this occasion we made a permanent swap of our pork-pie hats' (*DTT*, 178)

'If we have been ravished by a poem, it will cost us our own poem.'[2]

There are certain startling parallels between the work of Dylan Thomas and Glyn Jones which beg to be fully addressed. Whilst the longstanding relationship between Thomas and Vernon Watkins has always aroused attention,[3] the friendship between Thomas and Jones has tempted fewer voices into the realms of speculation.[4] This is surprising, as their poetic styles are startlingly comparable: their linguistic innovations and fascination with language is distinctly shared, as is a marked tendency towards the grotesque. Augmenting these stylistic similarities, there are correlations in their creative shifts from early experimentalism towards a later romanticised realism, and in their penchant for the narratorial voice of childhood reminiscence. Both thought of themselves primarily as poets and yet also wrote very diverse and sophisticated prose. And yet, despite these numerous points of comparison, this is no straightforward identical twinning; the doppelgängers created by their friendship (projections cast by themselves onto the other) are as unnerving as those of De Quincey's spectre at Brocken, and their differences are as stark as their

similarities. The nature of their individual modernism, the timbre of their ideologies, the temper of their personalities, and their cultural positioning both cause and constrain their union and cause their writing to diverge as definitively as their friendship. The fears they inspire in each other, the clarity with which they perceive self-reflections in the other and the subsequent antipathy aroused, engender a complex friendship which is never transparent. The fact that they shared a visit to their common early literary hero Caradoc Evans seems to symbolise the strange symbiosis between these two writers, and the disparity in their recollection of the weekend only serves to emphasise the manner in which they and their work ultimately disjoin.

They did not necessarily approve of each other; in fact Thomas was disturbed by Jones's upright nature and was openly critical of him in his letters (although to others and not to Glyn). Jones never openly criticises Thomas, but it is plain that his ardent dislike of Bohemianism must at some point have implicated his friend. One can sometimes discern the fleeting silhouette of Dylan Thomas in some of Jones's characterisation, especially in his creation of 'artistic types'. In fact, Thomas was probably not mistaken that Jones did on one level disapprove of his very un-Welsh attitude towards art. Most Welsh poets (in either language) would subsidise their writing by a full time occupation, often, like Glyn Jones, teaching. Dylan infamously tumbled his way through life collecting a living from wherever he landed.

Given that Thomas is clearly the superior writer, any profound influence is most likely to move from him to Jones. However, it would be too simplistic to accept Thomas as the original and Jones as the copy, as both were writing and experimenting

before meeting each other. Influence is as slippery as water, and even the merest few words can form a wave that shifts the mind onto a course that might otherwise have been uncharted. Language is as evasive as the sea when it comes to ownership. The conversation of friends is frequently as incestuous as it is fluid; and where one idea ends and another begins is often hard to distinguish. That they read each other's work is incontrovertible, in fact Thomas playfully observes his own influence on Jones in an early letter. The poems in question are indeed clearly influenced by Thomas's more opaque style and their existence does reveal the intensity of the influence in what would be the expected direction, as will become evident later in this discussion. The question is whether what is occurring is merely the coincidental location of two minds within a shared cultural dilemma and historical location or whether the overlap is indicative of a far more conflicted and complex relationship.

The initial problem is to establish a mode of enquiry. The insistent teleological format that characterises Harold Bloom's theory of influence could be adapted to fit an instance of contemporary anxiety but in the process the very nature of that theory would be undermined to such an extent that it would be itself an act of critical misprision. Jones and Thomas may have felt anxious about each other's work on occasions, but this was not necessarily an anxiety that can be fully elucidated by following the rubric of the Bloomian ephebe's rewriting of Milton's fallen Satan. Bloom is and will be a useful and illuminating touchstone for this analysis, but this is not a reading that adopts a completely 'Bloomian' stance. The two Anglo-Welsh writers are contemporaneous, and this itself is the largest obstacle to the straightforward adoption of Bloom's model of vertical struggle with and emasculation of a previous and dominating poetic voice. If one were to adopt this model, then

Thomas would undoubtedly be the strong poet and Jones his successor, but it is not always Jones who reveals himself to be threatened by Thomas; the Swansea poet is equally disturbed by his Merthyr contemporary. Ultimately the two poets are far too unequally matched ever to fully satisfy the criteria for Bloom's model. However, Bloom is vital to this analysis because he provides a language of anxiety with which to explore the sub-textual fallout of their meeting.[5]

The concept of the 'double' that characterised fictional Romantic and Gothic texts, and has been explored in more recent theories of 'The Uncanny',[6] is perhaps one means of elucidating the complexity of the relationship between Jones and Thomas. Some of the coincidences that structure the lives of these two writers are certainly 'uncanny'. However, the Doppelgänger is traditionally an identical double, and once sighted is a death omen. Only a metaphorical death can be considered characteristic of this literary doubling, and one could argue that it is Jones's name and work that has died outside Wales. That, of all the contemporary 'Anglo-Welsh' writers, his is the work that most resembles that of Thomas, and is therefore mostly overshadowed by it, is significant. Dylan Thomas achieved so much in a similar and more successful manner that Jones has paid the price of more than glimpsing the figure of his doppelgänger, and has faded into the background.

One can certainly see how these mythical doppelgängers, the Oedipal need to kill the figure of the father and the explosive Nietzschean notions of creativity and destruction, feed into Bloom's theory of poetic anxiety. For the young un-established Thomas, the idea that another writer could be working in obscure solitude, and be equal if not better than he, was, Jones relates, a source of acute anxiety. This

conforms to Bloom's theory of that state. That an imaginary doppelgänger could emerge suddenly from nowhere, to emasculate everything that Thomas believes himself to be, is intrinsically relative to the fear of death or eradication.[7] This classic fear of the existence of an imaginary double that could undermine the individuality of the 'I' is, in its extreme form, a classified state of psychosis. I suppose Jones's reference to Thomas's unease at his proximate existence compels the reader to question why he chooses to include this piece of information: the way in which Thomas is textually constructed in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* will receive substantial attention in this chapter.

It is important to note that the sense of otherness that the two writers perceive in each other is not fixed, and is constantly shifting throughout their textual relationship. They appear to circle each other, with attitudes alternating between generosity and suspicion, and this is a characteristic of this literary relationship. The relationship I am referring to is specifically that which is contained within the texts. It is not my intention to make any grand gestures concerning any supposedly fundamental truth about their friendship. What is known about how each received the other is recorded only in the pages they left behind and it is this, along with the way in which the impact of the 'other' filters into each's creative writing, that is of interest to me. It strikes me that they knew each other in the partial way that makes the 'idea' of a person all the more powerful than the 'reality'. They were not consistently or profoundly intimate, but knew enough of each other to recognise what was similar and what was different; what was to be revered and what to be feared. This is the shape and the limit of the friendship that is present in the texts and it is this that I have to work with. In a relationship which is restricted in this way, much is repressed,

much unspoken, and much only half-conceived about the other. It is that which is half-conceived or unacknowledged about Thomas that lurks in the shadows of Jones's creative work. These spectres of the half-light and the subterranean mind are the focus of this chapter, along with a more specific analysis of direct influence, and the consideration of inter-textuality as a means of illuminating and defining the spaces between a poetic hero and his largely forgotten friend.

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In 1934 Dylan Thomas and Glyn Jones journeyed to Aberystwyth to meet their literary hero. These two young, relatively inexperienced writers on the very cusp of their first wave of success were young pretenders to Caradoc Evans's controversial 'Anglo-Welsh' literary Crown, and would both reveal the extent of their indebtedness to Evans's grotesque parodies of West Wales in their later short stories. The relevance of this shared experience, at such an impressionable time, as it signified what was to continue to be a common creative characteristic throughout their careers: both writers utilised the method enabled by Evans's satires as a means of understanding and criticising their homeland. Thomas's early voices tended to reproduce the vitriolic and unsympathetic parodies of Evans, whilst Jones reacted with a more compassionate empathy; however both, in the manner of their precursor, chose on occasion to expose the ignorance, inconsistencies and hypocrisies that undermined the civilised veneer of non-conformist piety and the Welsh culture. However, what is starkly different is the manner in which each writer recalls and records this notable trip. Thomas, who breezily refers to the meeting only in passing, makes no reference to the presence of Glyn Jones (*CL,* 198). One would be forgiven for thinking he was

not there at all. In contrast, Jones virtually ritualises the event in his Chapter on Thomas in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues.* The solemnity of the permanent exchange of pork pie hats (*DTT,* 178) becomes heavily symbolic of what this outing means to this relationship, and what he would like the friendship to become. How far Jones idealises with hindsight, embroidering a myth of Dylan Thomas that implicates himself, is interesting. As the first chapter of this thesis has revealed, he was certainly not averse to rewriting the story of his own family in the light of his own personal and ideological requirements, so it would not be so surprising for him to perform a similar act of transformation on this friendship. His need to derive meaning out of this shared rite of artistic passage conflicts with a comparable but antagonistic need in Thomas, who is equally anxious to convey that he and Caradoc were real ideological cronies who went drinking together in Aberystwyth.[8] The brief reference to the outing is made only in passing in a subsequent letter to Pamela Hansford Johnson (*CL, 198*). However, the fact that Thomas himself so easily disregards Jones, and condemns him to silence in his own version of the experience, is in itself interesting. What, one is left wondering, is it about Jones that either so fails to register with Thomas that he overlooks him or alternatively registers so strongly that he marginalises both his presence and his voice?

The skeleton of the friendship that emerges from Thomas's letters is not so different to that recalled and recounted after Thomas's death in Jones's book *The Dragon Has Two Tongues.* However, the tone and the content of Thomas's letters differ considerably and on many occasions are at variance with Jones's later reminiscences. A brief account of the friendship as it appears in the letters reveals that it commenced in March 1934, and was initiated by Jones after reading 'The Woman

Speaks' in *The Adelphi* magazine.[9] The two writers were in contact throughout 1934, exchanging views and work, and during this year they made numerous arrangements to meet in Swansea[10] and London,[11] planning to make the two excursions discussed above. However, by March 1935 there appears to be a lapse, one which coincides with Thomas's literary success, his introduction to Caitlin, and Glyn Jones's own marriage. In 1936 contact is reinitiated by Jones after the acceptance of his own book (*The Blue Bed*) for publication and a published review of Thomas's *Twenty Five Poems* by Glyn Jones in *The Adelphi.*[12] By March 1938, despite the launching of *Wales*, to which both Thomas and Jones contributed creative work and reviews, Thomas is writing to Meurig Walters that he hasn't 'seen him [Glyn Jones] for two years' (*CL*, 333). In spite of this apparent decline in contact, Thomas is always quick to recommend Jones professionally for various roles that arise in Wales,[13] as prompt, in fact, as he is to assassinate Jones's character whenever he has met him in person.[14] Thomas is more polite the greater the physical distance between them and this is revealing enough without diving any further into the literary psychology of these letters. Jones himself recognised that he represented what Thomas desired to escape, and yet never quite could – his Welsh non-conformist heritage. The culture that Thomas perceived as an artistic straightjacket, Jones appeared to embrace and wore with a tailored pride that antagonised Thomas, the more so, because he could still see himself in the cut. When forced to confront that particular part of himself, the part he was so anxious to suppress, he emerges with his pen poised for a fight.

The first evidence of vitriol towards Jones emerges only two months after their introduction, during the weekend spent at Laugharne. (The rapidity of that jaunt only accentuates the sudden intensity of their early intimacy.) In the following

passage, Thomas can be seen to set Jones up as his binary opposite. From Glyn Jones he constructs a stereotype of goodness with which to emphasise his own devilishness, and against which to define himself as a moral and cultural rebel / outcast (like Caradoc Evans, one who is 'pelted with stones'). This semi-fictionalised Jones, in effect, is a tool to hew the identity and the persona of the observer, not the observed. Thomas writes to Pamela Hansford Johnson from Laugharne in May 1934:

> I am staying with Glyn Gower Jones. You remember I showed you one of his bad poems in the Adelphi. He is a nice, handsome young man with no vices. He neither smokes, drinks or whores. He looks very nastily at me down his aristocratic nose if I have more than one Guiness at lunch, and is very suspicious when I go out by myself. I believe he thinks that I sit on Mr. Hughes' castle walls with a bottle of Rye Whisky, or revel in the sweet confusion of a broadflanked fisherwoman. (*CL, 162*)

Ultimately it suits Thomas's idea of himself to suggest that Jones should think so meanly of him. He sets himself up as anti-hero whilst also disentangling himself from the puritanical stereotype ascribed to most Welshmen. Even the use of 'aristocratic' to describe Jones's nose is not an idle adjective. It serves to reiterate Thomas's acquired socialism and his 'down to earth' smoking, drinking and whoring in the face of a more removed figure. What truth there is in this observation of Jones is obscured by Thomas's own insecure and yet ingenious manoeuvrings. If the shadow of Jones is not quite as evident in Thomas's published fictions as Thomas is in those of Jones, Thomas certainly compensates for this apparent absence of influence by fictionalising

Jones in his letters. Jones becomes implicated and embroiled in the artistic myth that the young Dylan Thomas doggedly fabricates around himself. This becomes increasingly evident as one continues to read this same letter. The subsequent passage contains a subtle attempt by Thomas to define himself and his poetry against Jones via the work of Pamela Hansford Johnson. Thomas's image of Jones, fabricated as a foil for the assertion of his own voice, verges upon that of the stereotypically pious Welshman who is parodied so frequently in Thomas work. It becomes quite apparent that it is not simply the 'real' Glyn Jones who is presented by Thomas here and in other subsequent letters, but the intervening shadow of a disturbingly 'idealised' figure nurtured by both the needs and the fears of Thomas. Reading the following passage from Jones's point of view one wonders whether he deserves such censure or such praise.

> Incidentally, I showed him some of your poems, your latest poems. And he couldn't understand them at all. An ardent admirer of the Criterion, he fails to understand you. And it's quite true. You are getting pleasantly obscure, and much of what you write at the moment must seem quite mazy and difficult to almost anyone except myself. But then the reason is obvious. I, too, am mazy and difficult. We are both in our fleshy lives. (*CL*, 162)

What this passage reveals most of all is how the young Dylan Thomas perceives doubles in his literary friends; doubles who either confirm his originality like Pamela Hansford Johnson or threaten it like Glyn Jones. Thomas's criticism of Jones is unfair - a means of contrasting himself with him in order to retain the integrity of his own character and artistic identity. The mere mention of the *Criterion* acts as a signpost

which associates Jones immediately with the English literary establishment and poets such as Auden, Spender and Day-Lewis, writers whom Thomas has previously and passionately maligned. This alone comfortably locates Jones in opposition to Johnson and himself, without need for any further elaboration. That Thomas has discerned in Jones an alter-ego that is both compelling and unsettling is clear, and this is reiterated by the way in which he continues to use Johnson as a more sympathetic and affirming literary double ('We are both in our fleshy lives' [*CL*, 162]). In this passage Pamela Hansford Johnson arguably becomes the device with which he disentangles himself and his work from this disquieting 'other'. The 'mazy and difficult' work ascribed to Johnson is really Thomas's own. The pair 'understand' one another in a way that does not merely exclude Jones, but places him in absolute counter-poise with them. It suits Thomas to exaggerate Jones's puritanism ('No vices') in order to valorise his own excesses and to emphasise Jones's poetic conservatism in contrast with his own creative abstraction. This diminishes the sense of threat that the presence of his double has clearly inspired. Thomas neutralises his anxiety by textually distancing this double that he has to a great extent created from the person of Glyn Jones. The truth, if one can really locate it, is that Glyn Jones is no stranger to poetic obscurity and the innovation that can emerge from it. But Thomas cannot psychically afford to acknowledge this.

This is not the last time that Thomas treats Jones in this strange manner in his correspondence. A subsequent letter sees him swept up into Thomas's disconsolate and petulant mood, and transformed into an exaggerated figure of ungenerous measurement and judgement. The letter in question is written in 1949 to John Davenport.

> It is bad in a small community where everything is known: temporary insolvency goes the glad rounds as swift as a miscarriage. I owe a quarter's rent on my mother's house, Llewelyn's school fees (for last term), much to each tradesman. Yesterday I broke my tooth on a minto...Glyn Jones, the biggest Prig in Wales, is coming to see me on Saturday about something priggish...looking about him, prigbrows lifted, in my fuggy room like an unloved woman sniffing at the maid's linen on the maid's day out. (*CL*, 805)

It is clear that Jones becomes the personification of all that Thomas claims to despise about his homeland, but in this instance he is translated into the recriminating figure that exposes Thomas's failures. Jones becomes the monstrous other whose relentless steadiness, commitment and 'thirstlessness' places Thomas's own dissipation and haphazard domestic economics into rather unpleasant relief. The chastisement that Thomas perceives at the hands of the villagers, and that he ultimately heaps on himself, is projected onto the unsuspecting person of Jones. Again he becomes that unfortunate doppelgänger. The fact that Thomas is 'behind with [his] filmscript, a year behind with Peer Gynt' (*CL*, 805), only compounds the irritation that the appearance of Glyn Jones into his domestic chaos provokes. One could make much of Thomas's use of 'my fuggy room'. His penchant for poeticising rooms as minds[15] and vice versa can only mean that as much as Thomas refers to the physical rooms of the boathouse he is also referring to the 'fuggy rooms' of his internal life and most specifically his art. Jones as an intruder into this literary room is really a figure who could potentially chastise his work and his poetic identity. This, for Thomas, is far more profound an exposure than that of mere 'linens'. Jones as an intimidating

intruder into this private world of his writing brings to mind Thomas's short story 'The Lemon',[16] an obscure tale that is concerned with sinister doubles whose unexplained presences steal away the integrity of the 'I'. The story is about a small child, thwarted, judged and manipulated by an imagined doctor who appears to represent all that is controlling, conventional and parched about the establishment and the type of mind it produces. It seems to be this type of constraining and inhibiting character that Jones suggests for Thomas, and that he is always forced to symbolise in comments such as this. Thomas perceives something in Jones that diminishes and frustrates him, something that he must evade in order to sustain, not simply the integrity, but also the illusion of his own persona. In this story Thomas can be seen as having his own potentially 'Bloomian' struggle with a father-figure who is a conflation of influences that implicates more than Jones.[17]

As much as Thomas is clearly agitated by Jones, and critical of him, it seems that he is equally implicated as a double in Jones work. However, the feelings that run so evidently high for Thomas are more effectively disguised by Jones. Despite this subterfuge, the shadow of the other writer is repeatedly evident in Jones's characterisation. There are two texts in particular that obliquely intimate the presence of Thomas: the novel *The Valley, the City, the Village* and the short story 'The Tower of Loss'. From the moment of meeting, Thomas appears to become so enmeshed in Jones's perception and representation of the 'poet-artist', that whenever the figure emerges in his fiction the silhouette of the idealised other is as discernible as that of his self. Jones by his own admission tends towards utilising autobiographical material in his works, but how far he is really conscious of just how much Thomas figures in the shadows of his texts is unclear. In *The Valley, the City the Village,* Trystan

observes Alcwyn's method of social climbing in the city,[18] and the manner is reminiscent of Jones's own observation of Thomas's posturing. Alcwyn, whom Trystan meets and appears to be close to early in his university career, and whom he gradually becomes more and more removed from, displays many of the traits that Jones perceives in Thomas. Alcwyn is entertaining, good company, confident and charming, yet at the same time he is ambitious, fickle, unreliable and shifts allegiance according to his own desires and needs. Their early friendship, so promising and full of potential, drifts inexplicably into an acquaintanceship. The inherent reflection of the real life friendship between Thomas and Jones needs little explication. Alcwyn provokes the same veiled criticisms in Trystan that Thomas tended to provoke in Jones. Alcwyn is a social chameleon, who adopts various stances depending upon the company he is in, presents himself flamboyantly via tall stories to the middle and upper classes of Dinas and charms his way disingenuously through the upper echelons of that society by virtue of his persuasive tongue. His fictions verge upon lies, and his self-aggrandizement and consequent success is a subject for both moral recrimination and for a scarcely obscured envy for the less successful and erudite Trystan. The extent to which the relationship between Trystan and Alcwyn illuminates and indeed reflects that between Jones and Thomas is interesting. In a notebook at the National Library of Wales[19] Jones writes:

> Very few eyes can see the mystery of [a man's] life, said Keats.
>
> [Mine are certainly not] among the few that saw the mystery of Dylan's.

This is also published in *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* In *The Valley, the City, the Village*, Trystan thinks something comparable of Alcwyn, after he learns that he has merely been using Mabli to further his career.

> Alcywn, even when we were at our friendliest, had always been a puzzle to me and now his character had become completely incomprehensible. (*VCV*, 225)

Glyn Jones never directly criticises Thomas in any texts, yet his acerbic dislike of bohemianism, his intolerance of social manoeuvring and all such public superficialities, necessarily condemns Thomas by association. The closest Jones comes to an open criticism of his friend concerns exactly this.

> I did not feel altogether happy, as time went on, with the prodigal manner in which Dylan seemed to be prepared to bestow his friendship (*DTT*, 172-3)

That these lines also betray an element of barely camouflaged personal pique is incontrovertible. It is painfully evident that Jones is overlooked and diminished as a consequence of what he over-generously, even disingenuously, refers to as Thomas's 'lack of discrimination'. Jones responds to the rejection with a barely adequate generosity when he describes Thomas as 'friendly with everyone, irrespective of talent, character, charm, or any other attraction'. Surely this Thomas cannot be equated with the very discriminatory, shifting Thomas who is revealed by his letters.

Thomas may be the most talented Welsh poet of his generation and inspire Jones excessively and dangerously with his use of language, but he possesses personal characteristics that Jones can view only with contempt. In the same notebook quoted above, he writes that 'No Welsh writer has ever had an allowance', yet it is precisely such an allowance that Thomas ostensibly requires and desires throughout his career, as he pesters his many correspondents for loans. In his youth he even jokily declares 'Oh would the days of literary patronage were back again!' (*Letters*, 123). Jones is severe, even uncompromising, in his disdain for the privileges of the English middle classes and a relentless upholder of the Welsh poetic paradigm, the working craftsman rather than the spoilt artist. Of course one wonders whether Jones's stance is fuelled by his own resentment of the fact that he is forced to work in order to survive. Thomas's extravagance and recklessness could expose for Jones that which he tolerates least in his own nature: his tendency towards the same Romantic ideal of the artist that Thomas seems to him to personify. It could be said that Jones certainly has nothing other than tedium and mundanity to express about the burden of his working life. The extravagance of a nature that is curbed by the necessities of economic survival (that Thomas seems able to ignore), is what emerges artistically and linguistically unchecked in Jones's use of flamboyant metaphor and the intricate filigreed ornamentation of his poetry. Just as Jones represents the claustrophobia, moral exactitude and sexual repression of the Welsh Puritan world that Thomas despises and parodies so relentlessly, and yet cannot seem to do without. (Why settle in Laugharne if small town rural west Wales is so abhorrent?) Thomas represents a freedom from obligation and duty, a liberation of expression that despite all Jones's censure he on one level desires and aspires to, yet is forced to repress. This desire can only be substantiated by his fascination with Thomas, just as Jones's own Romantic

sensibilities find expression through his unshakable passion for D.H. Lawrence, the late Victorian Romantic poets, and the decadents and aesthetes of the fin de siècle with their frequently overwritten language, their ornamental metaphors, and their elaborate rewriting of myth. It is the same indulgent desire for expression that draws him to these writers that inspires him so intensely about Thomas and his work. Thus Jones and Thomas appear to symbolize for each other what they privately perceive to be their own weaknesses. As much as their similarities draw them together, it is ironically those same similarities that become the differences that force them apart.

Dylan Thomas's letter of circa 14th March 1934, apparently his second to Glyn Jones, contains a very dense critique of all schools of modern poetry. Intimidating in its breathless breadth of knowledge and depth of intuition, it assesses and dismisses all from Eliot through Auden to Stein and Jolas. Thomas builds a literary platform on which to flaunt his own (yet to be publicly validated) prowess and to impress, if not overwhelm, the unknown phenomenon of Glyn Jones, whose work he is anxious to peruse.

> I should like to see your work very much, not for the sake of pinning it down and labelling it like a butterfly as I appear to have done above, but merely to enjoy or not to enjoy it. (*CL*, 122)

The next published letter, dated mid April 1934, sees Thomas satisfied, and contrary to his claim, it makes sure Jones is thoroughly pinned down and labelled.

> I read your 'Tiger Bay' in the *Adelphi.* I didn't like it very much, but

> then I am biased about that sort of thing. I liked the 'hooks of her hair' though and the 'guts' of the thing were undeniable. (*CL*, 141)

Judging by his response to the poem that is now better known as 'Docks', Dylan Thomas has formed a sufficient opinion of Glyn Jones that he can end his letter,

> Your poetry and probably your theories of poetry are so opposed to mine that we should have plenty to discuss. (*CL*, 141)

Thomas has immediately and self-defensively recognised not what aligns him with Jones but that which sets him apart from the other. That it suits Thomas to have few poetic familiars is immediately evident and that a dynamic of otherness dictates Thomas's perception of his friendship with Jones is again starkly apparent. Jones's own reaction to Thomas, when he recalls their first meeting, results in a reciprocal kind of doubling. But whereas Thomas happily locates and emphasises their differences, Jones elaborates on their 'bond,' which is for him forged through their similarities: 'our Welsh backgrounds, our approval in general of the work appearing in the *Adelphi* and the *Criterion* and in our admiration for Lawrence, Hopkins, Joyce and Yeats' (*DTT*, 166). Both construct the dynamics and determine the subsequent parameters of this new friendship very differently.

By the time Jones and Thomas met in April 1934, Thomas had already written most, if not all, of that work which would be published in *18 Poems* and *25 Poems*. Thus any impact Jones had on him would be difficult to discern in any of this work. One would rather have to look towards the stories he wrote at this time. Both

'The Burning Baby' and 'The Enemies' are works in which the puritan nature of Welsh non-conformity are viciously parodied. How far Jones's own upright nature seeped through the surface of Thomas's thought at the time is however impossible to determine. The letters certainly betray a strength of scorn that is comparable to the narration of his stories. One could even say the juxtaposition of the Reverend Mr. Davies and Mr. Owen in 'The Enemies' resonates superficially with the doubling of Jones and Thomas. The one (victim of his own moral repressions) is lost on the hills, buffeted by the climate and nature of a far more sinister and pre-Christian Wales, and the other is the happy tender of that very chaotic and threatening garden. However, this story was written before the first meeting, and was in fact one of the manuscripts that Thomas gave to Jones for his opinion. Although Thomas did perceive Jones to be symptomatic of all he represented as 'rotten in the state' of Wales, this is insufficient reason to assume that Jones himself figured in his work. Jones would rather have served as convenient confirmation of his art rather than an active instigator of it. In contrast, it is possible to perceive signs of Thomas and of the anxiety he provoked in works written by Jones. What emerges from the poems is not the easy homage and doubling that Jones leads the reader to expect in his later memories, recorded after Thomas's death. Despite the intense affect with which Jones recalls his friend in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* there is no poem written directly to or about Thomas in his work. Most poets who have suffered this type of collision with a comparable 'strange friend'[20] acknowledge it as a source of their poetry. For example, Vernon Watkins writes many poems to or about his friend. But Thomas is only to be found in the subtext of Jones's work, proving that it is not only Thomas who desires to silence his double. Thomas casts a very threatening and frustrating shadow around the margins of the poems Jones wrote around the time of the initial meeting.

Bloom writes in *The Anxiety of Influence* that 'A poem is not an overcoming of anxiety, but is that anxiety'.[21] Subsequently, he also writes that 'A poem is a poet's melancholy at his lack of priority'.[22] There are four poems written after 'Dock' ('Tiger Bay') that embody such an anxiety: 'Sande' (*CP*, 7-8), 'Easter' (*CP*, 8), 'Rant' (*CP*, 8) and 'Man' (*CP*, 9). They are all poems in which narrative meaning collapses into the mood they convey. The first three share a preoccupation with light and seeing, and with night and stars and unseeing, which suggests that on some fundamental level they are concerned with poetic vision and its failure. Pertinent to this discussion, they are works that struggle with the clarity and intensity of sight and the ability to write successfully and meaningfully. They are poems that are inherently in dialogue, not merely with Dylan Thomas, but also with Jones's own original voice that has been so staggered by that of another, it can only express its own fear that it has somehow been anticipated and thus effectively silenced. It seems to make sense to read these poems like dreams; to seek out the recurring motifs, and highlight the stuttering that betrays the anxiety that literal language is unable to express.

It is therefore no accident of the moment, that in two of these poems Jones utilises names from *The Mabinogion.*[23] The unconscious need to anchor the verse in the nomenclature of this seminal Welsh-language text exposes a voice whose confidence has been so undermined that it is anxious to re-establish a firm foundation for its poetry. Sande and Lleu are characters of differing importance in *The Mabinogion*: the former is allotted only a few sentences, while the latter is the hero of an entire branch. One was so beautiful that 'no-one laid his spear in him ... because...everyone thought him an attendant angel'.[24] The other managed to evade

the destiny of a curse, and was thus able to define himself and control his own life. In effect both were resilient to their fate. More idly, and perhaps fantastically, one could also observe that Sande Pryd *Angel* anticipates Jones own description of Thomas as he recalls their first meeting in *The Dragon has Two Tongues*: 'there was something rather angelic about Dylan's appearance, angelic and tremendously endearing' (*DTT*, 163). In the notes to the collected edition of Jones's poems Meic Stephens records his comment that he chose the name Sande for "no other reason than because he 'liked beautiful people'" (*CP*, 140). The resonances are considerable enough to argue an association with the 'Angelic' Dylan Thomas, especially when in the same note Jones is quoted as saying of his friend that his influence 'was, for a time, considerable' (*CP*, 139).

When in the opening line to 'Rant', Lleu cries 'Nothing diminishes this sun', one cannot help thinking of the poetic other whom Jones has just met, and who, by his own admission, has virtually struck him dumb. In *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, Jones refers to the 'tremendous impact' (*DTT*, 162) his first readings of Thomas had upon 'a person of my temperament and background'. The 'effect was overwhelming'. This is starkly evident in these poems. 'Overwhelmed' is an interesting signpost for this discussion. It not only captures the 'admiration' that Jones repeatedly refers to, it also conveys Jones's impression of having been physically affected. His reaction to these poems, and to the man who wrote them, is one so emotionally intense, so 'tremendous', that it takes the form of displacement and enters the realm of the Sublime. Such an effect sits well with Jones's other chosen language of spells and enchantment mobilised to express the nature of this 'impact'. The perception is that Thomas has shifted Jones's poetic voice, has

disarranged ('scattered') it. Jones has been oppressed and his talents thus suppressed by his precocious friend's poetic talents. It is this experience that is astonishingly apparent in the four poems I intend to discuss below.

When one considers this 'tremendous impact' (language that is more at home in the description of celestial collisions, meteor crashes or planetary misalignments), one begins to understand how, to use Bloom's words, Jones can suddenly 'be awash in the word not quite [his]own', and how, from this submergence, 'Sande', 'Easter', 'Rant' and 'Man' could struggle to the surface. The anxiety by which they are inhabited and to which they give form, the deaths they are preoccupied with, and the sense of a tussling rebirth they attempt to affirm, seem to reflect the repressed shadow (or 'covering cherub') of Thomas, who has acted so strongly upon this other poet, he has become the unknowing possessor of his language. The only place to trace this impact, this grappling with the 'other', is in the words themselves, and there a conflict becomes strikingly apparent. Jones struggles between his own language and convulsive allusions to Thomas. His own vocabulary tussles with borrowings that have blatantly seeped into his work via his readings of Thomas. The organic imagery and muscularity of form and phrase that is so typical of Thomas is juxtaposed with the mechanical industrial metaphor that has already begun to characterise Jones's own particular brand of innovative modernism in poems such as 'Docks' and 'Ship'. In 'Easter', 'The budding beech *pipes* /bulb into announcement', (*CP,* 8) and homage seems to bleed ambiguously into parody, as the echo of the 'the force that through the green fuse drives the flower',[25] rises to obliterate any meaning outside this insistent inter-textual dialogue. More resilient is the subsequent phrase 'the piston of /The painful sap pumps up the flinty trunks' (*CP,*

8), in which the industrial imagery of Jones if not overpowers, at least balances his borrowings. However, the opening line of this poem is so reminiscent of 'Light breaks where no sun shines'[26] ('No stick of light bulls on the useless lids" [*CP*, 8]) that it is difficult to discern where the voices diverge, except in the immediate and antagonistic meaning (and one could alternatively make much of this particular opposition as a form of parody and/or as a self-defensive reclamation of Thomas's own language to give shape to the blinded state he has engendered in Jones). The last lines could be read in a similar manner ('and no green rods/Climb from the loiny embers of man'[*CP*, 8]). That Jones again signposts his own creative dilemma by employing the language of the one who provoked it is clear. How conscious Jones is of this subversive homage is debateable. What is certain is that the images of the sexualised human body and the cavernous corpse haunted by ghosts have burst as explosively into Jones's work as Thomas himself burst into his life. The deadlock and fusion that subsequently results as the two languages spar reveals a writer alternatively overcome and then victorious, simultaneously paying his debts and claiming his independence.

It is significant that the language most reminiscent of Thomas is that which is suggestive of hauntings, of death, of physical beings who have been stripped of flesh, of life that has been stripped of its fecundity, of light and darkness and eyes that cannot see. In 'Sande' 'the winds pluck off his ripened flesh like leaves', his eyes are 'lantern holes'. In 'Rant' there is reference to both 'a planet streaming ghosts' and 'pull[ing] skin over ghost'. There is also repeated use of words that suggest a falling from axis, a shift in psyche and language that is pertinent to this discussion. I refer particularly to 'skidding'; 'the tiltings / of a star and the nudge of brittle tears';

'scattered' and 'scatter'; and 'sliding sea-stars', which seem to indicate the recurrent sense of being knocked off centre, even of being dispersed. To resort to Bloom once again, this insistent tattoo of insecurity appears symptomatic of an anxiety repressed to the extent of morbidity.[27] Such an anxiety is even evident in the deceptive certainty of 'Sande', in which sainthood/eternal life/searing vision is achieved through sacrifice (and it is essentially all three that are on the line when a poet faces his double). This sacrifice, the martyrdom of a saint whose suffering and eradication of self is rewarded by a form of perfect vision ('Scattered he prays and sees his pulsing star') is one that is utterly idealised. Such a sacrifice cannot and does not occur between writers who see their own death in the existence of another, and yet the voice of 'Sande' flirts with exactly this idea that there may be something righteous about being 'unwritten' so gloriously for the greater cause of genius. This poem is a heavily romanticised construction of the dilemma that meeting Thomas has presented for Jones. Does he cede precedence gracefully? Indeed has he even any choice? Is this poem merely playing with the notion that he even has that degree of control over his own life? The sacrifice desired and expressed cannot be made because the willingness to die does not eradicate the fact that it is instigated by another hand. Jones unconsciously uses Sande Pryd Angel as his own double and this is inherently deconstructive because, unlike himself, Sande cannot die. The sacrifice of life through battle never belonged to Sande, as definitively as Jones's poetic life is ultimately doomed to be taken not given. The beautiful bestowal of life upon a deadly rival that is offered in this poem is thus an illusion, a denial of truth, and a repression of the real anxiety that Jones is perplexed by: namely that in the shadow of Thomas he must die an artistic death, and that he cannot even begin to assimilate the reality of this fact.

Thus, one layer of 'Sande' is an exploration of what it is to surrender; to allow oneself to be 'overwhelmed'. Of course one cannot, necessarily, discuss death without implicating life, and these poems deal in both. 'Sande' is a 'risking saint'; he is 'naked'; he has exposed himself deliberately, taken a chance on redemption, on being made anew, on being 'scattered' in order to see 'his pulsing star'. Of Thomas, Jones writes 'he made me, in some respects begin all over again',[28] but his qualifying comment about 'Sande' in no way reveals just how much this is true. If one skews the reading slightly the poem itself becomes the embodiment of a single moment of creative rebirth, dynamically akin to Sylvia Plath's 'Ariel'. The death which is in one sense very real and potentially permanent becomes merely a single instance of demise in order to reincarnate or resurrect. This is a line which is supported by the similar metaphoric preoccupation in 'Easter' and elucidated far more skilfully by Bloom when he discusses poetic 'Catastrophe' in *A Map of Misreading.*[29] The 'ecstatic breakthroughs' of Hardy that Bloom maintains were enabled by Shelley, seem particularly relevant when considering Jones's debt to Thomas. The poems under discussion offer an example of this. 'Sande', in particular, can be read as either the expression of such an 'ecstatic breakthrough', or more negatively, as the idealised imitation of one that is hoped for but does not materialize. It is almost too rehearsed a rendition of such a 'breakthrough' to be genuine. But 'Sande' is also a poem compelled by an 'anxiety of influence' that had grasped Jones even before he'd encountered Thomas; namely the influence of the Romanticism of which this sublime death is an expression. In this poem Jones thus retreats into his first poetic haven and this only serves to expose his insecurity. Shelley is, for instance, evoked by the text when he cries of Keats in 'Adonais'[30] that 'He has outsoared the shadow of our night'[31] and merged with 'The Light whose smile kindles the Universe'.[32]

One could argue that it is the phrase 'Ghost-talk flim-flam' which symbolically seals Jones's ultimate control over the uncertainty and vagrancy of these poetic voices. The phrase occurs in 'Man', a poem where the rising defences of a poet can be seen emerging through the flippancy and dryness of the tone. Gone is the desperate plea- ridden yearning of 'Rant', where the uncertainty of the voice becomes conversational and is displaced onto another for resolution. Here is a determined survival and one achieved against the odds. Here, 'The crucifix's shortest armstump points up', which must on one level be a mockery of Jones's own sublime idealism in the earlier and star-struck 'Sande'. The Crucifix, icon in 'Sande' of surrenders, and sacrifices ('Sande's crucifix' becomes his 'crisscross star': his symbol of heavenly vision), is suddenly debunked and deformed: it is diminished ('shortest armstump') but resilient ('points up'), making it ridiculous yet enduring. The 'Ghost-talk flim-flam' is Poetry (both Jones's and Thomas's), the craving for which has provoked such a crisis, and which is also lampooned and rendered ridiculous. It is in part an unconscious reference to that repressed anxiety that haunts the poems, but in so far as it bears both of these connotations, 'ghost-talk flim-flam' is also a direct disparagement of Jones's earlier acquiescence to Thomas's influence and spectral presence in his work. One could even hypothesise that in 'Man', Jones is in direct conversation with Thomas's insinuation of influence in the letter dated '?early July 1934'.

> After reading your poem in *New Verse* I came to the very boastful conclusion that it was strongly influenced by myself (*CL*, 171)

The poem Thomas is referring to is 'Easter'. The timing is tight, and whether or not the direct link is measurable, the dialogue with Thomas stands. Jones published 'Man' in *New Verse* (10, August 1934) under the title 'Half an Ancestry', and Meic Stephens's editorial note reads:

> In the 'Sketch of the Author' GJ referred to it as creating a 'conjectural ancestor'. He also told me that the poem no longer made much sense to him, and that it was an example of what he called logopœic dance. (*CP*, 114)

The reference to 'half an ancestry' when transposed into the context of artistic families becomes especially apposite. That Glyn Jones can no longer locate the meaning or the impetus for this poem also implies that its moment was particularly unacknowledged. The vitriol mustered towards the unnamed primitive 'ancestor' is mostly unaccounted for in the poem. The voice presents a deliberately antagonistic anti-Romantic view of man that resonates with frustrated self-mockery and a form of ridicule that also implicates Thomas. Whether Jones creates a reflection of himself as an artistic 'primitive', one who 'suck[s only] small Sea-honey' and one who can bring forth only 'half-children', or whether he references all artists who deal in such airy 'ghost-talk flim-flam', poetry is being castigated as well as those men who fall for her snares. Thomas is stridently yet subtly lampooned in the following lines where again homage seeps unapologetically into parody.

> Gulped at some baggy tits for suck and love,
> Felt his half children screaming in his loins
> For entry, entry into grassy bone... (*CP*, 9)

The uninhibited physical images of fleshly fecundity reproduce Thomas, refracting his own language back at him as appropriated and other. What is certain is that the potential vision of 'Sande' is being countered in 'Man'. The image of sublime sacrifice has suddenly collapsed and the poet has been reduced to observing and enacting a life of petty picking on the edges of civilisation. The crucifix has been dismantled. The notion that man has evolved little beyond the bestial, indeed the reptilian, phases of development, suggests a comparably grim role for the poet. Yet it also offers a strange liberation, as it is easier to evade the death if one undermines the doppelgänger. By deflating the significance of the craft, by ridiculing the 'ghost-talk', by devaluing the ability to see 'his pulsing star', the poet is diminished and thus the threat of the double is neutralised.

The problem of how to secure a psychological space in which to work after meeting Thomas is only hypothetically resolved by 'Man', and I postulate that it is no accident that thereafter Jones apparently writes no poetry he considers publishable for two years. The next poem in Meic Stephens's edition of the *Collected Poems* is dated 1937. 'Scene' (*CP*, 9-10) is a much more fluent, less gristly, and more linguistically secure poem and demonstrates that during the intervening time Jones has shifted his attention from the experimental modernisms he shared with Thomas, to the cultural state of his own nation. This poem anticipates, and should be classed alongside, the (interestingly subsequent) Welsh language poems 'The Carcass'[33] and 'The Deluge, 1939'[34] by Saunders Lewis. It is very clear that Jones's exploration of his cultural hybridity has begun to fuse with his poetry as 'Scene' is followed by translations and interpretations of seminal Welsh works. This shift is especially significant for the

relationship between the two friends because it is through recognising his cultural duality and the implications that this has for his art that Jones manages to clear a space for his own voice. Bloom writes that 'Discontinuity is freedom' (*The Anxiety of Influence,* 39) and what is this but a deliberate discontinuity? Jones happily differentiates himself from Thomas via his 'Welshness'.

> As time went on I was conscious of not having rejected enough, of representing all too clearly for him what he had always wished to put behind him Welsh nationalism and a sort of hill farming morality, petit bourgeois narrowness and convention and so on...(*DTT,* 187)

Throughout the chapter on Thomas in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* Jones seeks a willing refuge in his bi-cultural task, and places Thomas quite definitively outside the Welsh-language culture that he himself embraces. Interestingly, he does not defend Thomas against the claims of anglicisation as there is certainly critical opportunity to do so and thus at least attempt to reclaim Thomas for Wales. Instead, on most occasions Jones reiterates Saunders Lewis's early statement that Thomas 'belongs to the English'.[35] This by default serves to reinforce the space Jones has claimed for his own voice within the Anglo-Welsh discourse. Whilst Thomas is the maverick 'other,' upsetting and challenging national theories of identity, there is an uncontested space for his double to inhabit. Perhaps this is a sceptical, even cynical, reading of the chapter, for there are sensitive ideological fault lines defining this text that Jones could only ignore at a personal cost. A conciliatory text anticipating a severe audience, it arguably could not contain the unbalancing presence of a prodigal Thomas who is entirely welcomed back into the fold. However, Jones's interpretation

of his own family history, which he on so many occasions compares with that of Thomas, seems considerably more amenable to readings that emphasise Welsh language origins, than he ever allows for Thomas. Having made a model of Merthyr and the upper valleys as one of particular cultural fusion, he does not extend that theorising to accommodate any other area of South Wales. Swansea and the Uplands he dismisses as the domain of the safe anglicised middle classes. There is a danger that his reading of Thomas's questionable 'Welshness' deconstructs the model he offers of his own Welsh lineage. If Thomas, who shares so many family resemblances with Jones (including an inherited landscape in Llansteffan and Llandybie and a cemetery in which both their ancestors were buried), is not sufficiently Welsh to satisfy the Welsh-language critics, then Jones's own cultural pedigree is surely as questionable. This has very pertinent implications for the discussion of their personal relationship and the uncanny resemblances that made it particularly difficult for Jones to carve a specific literary niche for himself.

There is a sad paradox inherent in the chapter Jones writes in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues*, and it is that the more he adulates Dylan Thomas the more he silences his own poetic voice. The more Jones proclaims the brilliance of this 'other', the more he dims his own literary light. There is something awfully significant about the fact that in this critical work Jones is the passive observer, the critic, of other artists, not the creator. It is the same passive 'assembling' role that belongs to Dewi in the story 'The Tower of Loss' (*CS*, 294-317). Except that Dewi is the not so intelligent friend of Gronow the Welsh poet (language non-specific), and acts as the foil for his more intelligent counterpart. The uneven duet-dynamic adopted in this tale is exaggerated for humorous effect but its nature cannot be innocent when

considering the difficult doubling of Thomas and Jones and the historical relevance the friendship has for this tale. 'The Tower of Loss', written in the 1960s after Dylan Thomas's early death, takes the 1930s for its period, and borrows from a number of autobiographical incidents that place Thomas unequivocally in the margins of the text. Two of the geographical locations – the ferry and Bohemian London – were explored by Jones in the company of Thomas[36] and were recalled in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* only a few years later, as pivotal moments of their friendship. I am not suggesting that these events are the only means of understanding the story, however they *are* psychological indicators that suggest the possibility that Thomas (consciously or unconsciously) is once again impinging upon Jones's work space.

If there is a reason that an individual recalls certain memories at the expense of others, then it is equally significant that those particular memories should again resurface together within a single work of short fiction. The character of Gronow seems to be exactly the kind of 'strange friend' that Jones found in Thomas, despite the fact that superficially he bears little resemblance to him. Physically and culturally Gronow is the antithesis of Thomas: 'swarthy and shapeless' (*CS*, 295) he belongs unequivocally to the Welsh Valleys and to the unsophisticated working classes. The way he sweats profusely seems to involve him in the bodily exertions of the people and most of his personal characteristics, not least his particular brand of cynical, derisive humour, seem to conform to this cultural archetype.[37] As a consequence it would be logical to assume that the artistic resemblances could also be only slight. A poet circumstanced thus could not be easily equated with Dylan Thomas, the social chameleon, London's 'lovely' and satirist of all things Welsh. And yet, Dewi describes Gronow thus:

> I had always studied the notices of his books with interest and they seemed to make him out to be some sort of literary freak, a bit of a monster almost, it seemed to me, a mixture, one of the critics said, of poetic toryism, dandyism and exoticism (*CS*, 295).

It is only with hindsight perhaps that we can fully appreciate the parallel that exists between this description of Gronow and Jones's image of Thomas.

The difficulty of understanding Thomas's work has made it fashionable to consider him as eccentric, individual, even 'monstrous', an isolated figure strangely akin to Gronow. Jones may have perceived more social agility in his friend than exists in this reserved character, but that there is an uncanny resemblance between the two is certain. Gronow is both familiar and foreign to Thomas. Indeed Gronow's description as conservative and a dandy (one excessively concerned with his appearance) is incongruent even with his apparent character. The description is more akin to the superficial bohemianism he mocks, than to the Valleys he is hewn from. This could indeed be one of those rare visible instances in which the idea of Thomas interferes with Jones's clarity and superimposes his friend's image on that of Gronow. One aspect of Gronow expresses the ideal of what Jones feels Thomas could have been if he had not been the conformist role-player that Jones observed: 'the man who stands alone, the Daniel figure who dares to do and to utter what he thinks right though the heavens fall' (*DTT*, 176). Alternatively Gronow could be regarded as instancing (like Thomas) just how a Welsh writer could be, and indeed was, misunderstood by the English establishment.[38] It is true that there is considerable use

of misdirection in this tale. What seems at first simple turns out to be more complex than was initially supposed.

Gronow, the poet, is the device by which Jones gently satirises the London world that Thomas inhabited, and yet it is the disingenuous narrator Dewi who lives with and is drawn in by the Bohemian Hoveringtons. Significantly, Dewi, who feigns foolishness, and yet has a surprisingly clear and incisive voice, uses Gronow to disguise and displace his own biting observations. On closer inspection the superficial dynamic between the Welsh duo disintegrates and one becomes startlingly aware that Dewi is not as limited in vision as he claims, and that Gronow is, ultimately, entirely his creation. It is via this complexity and uncertainty that the doubling of Jones and Thomas becomes relevant and significant, because, in the same way that Dewi envisages and interprets Gronow, Jones recreates Thomas and indeed Thomas reassembles Jones in his letters. In fact Dewi's position as admiring yet incisive inferior narrator is one that Jones himself adopts in the chapter on Thomas in *The Dragon has Two Tongues,*[39] and like Dewi, on many occasions the vision that he bestows on his friend is often his own. Thus, there are no obvious straight lines or fixed logical parallels to be found in this story. It is the manner and matter of the fiction that embroils the two writers once again in Jones's work. Gronow and Dewi are inextricably embedded within each other. Gronow's little 'beaded' and 'glittering' eyes, the location of such humour and clarity, are as much his as they belong to the one who describes them as such: Dewi. It is therefore Dewi, the assembler, the observer, the apparent inferior, who has the absolute power, because no matter how superior Gronow may be, in this particular incarnation he is merely a character in Dewi's fiction.

Ultimately, in *The Dragon has Two Tongues,* Thomas also belongs to Jones's fiction, and Jones's idea of his doppelgänger is one that frequently hypothesises how his friend would have evolved as a poet if he had been a native Welsh speaker.

> With his passion for words, his copious language, his endless patience, his welcoming of material disciplines what a superb *cynganeddwr* he would have been (*DTT*, 168)

> I have often wished, as I suggested before, that Dylan *had* known more about Welsh Wales and cared more about Welsh literary tradition (*DTT*, 174)

Gronow as the paradigmatic Welsh poet implicates both Thomas and Jones. Jones's conjuring of such a character that consists of what he aspires to, and what he admires most about another reveals how impossible it is for an individual to see either self or double clearly or in isolation. For certain, Jones is unable to see fully the extent to which his insistent impressions of Thomas may have infiltrated his text. In 1982, he gave a speech about this story at Caerleon, the transcript of which is to be found at the national library. He concludes as follows:

> A very large proportion of the scenes in my story, the places, the people, actually existed, and the events actually took place. Not, no doubt exactly as I represent them here, but the nucleus of each event in the story I would say actually happened. I have stood at such a ferry as I describe and shouted across for the boatman; I have had the misfortune to have been in such a

bohemian attic as Hoverington's, I knew a man like Gronow, and one like Hoverington, and one like Loss Llewelyn. Or rather I have known several men like Gronow, from whom I took various pieces to create my own Gronow.[40]

No writer's interpretation of his/her own work is entirely reliable and although Jones correctly identifies that the story has been informed by 'various pieces' of his life, he fails to identify the primary autobiographical moment(s) (specifically both the Bohemian attic in London and the Ferry across the river estuary are experiences that incriminate Thomas in this story). That which is silenced, unacknowledged, is a more reliable truth than the one that is voiced directly, and the allusion that does not draw attention to itself in this particular passage and in other critical and prose works, is the repeated yet off-centred reference made to Thomas, as if to an anchor. The sheer number of times that Thomas is mentioned in a work that ostensibly should not concern him is illuminating. It would seem that Jones cannot discuss his own work without reference to this 'other' to locate himself. It is plausible to say that this same force which draws him always to measure himself against his doppelgänger, is equally present when he works creatively, since it is then even more embedded within the silences and shadows of the text. It is obvious that Thomas is never far from Jones's mind when he writes it. He is at once what he aspires to and what he attempts to break down.

One cannot, though, overlook the fact that as much as Thomas is glimpsed in Gronow, he is also utterly incriminated by the satirised sins of the character of Loss Llewelyn in the same story. Loss Llywellyn is of course the bohemian met in the

London attic who is re-discovered in Wales rowing passengers back and forth across the estuary. Whilst the silhouette of an 'ideal' Thomas can be discerned in the imaginary 'Welsh' friend, Gronow, (the image of an 'ideal' Welsh writer that inevitably reflects back onto himself also), it is in Loss that the allusions to Thomas are more blatant. He is immediately called to mind by this English 'other', the spectre looming ridiculously on the other side of the river, who has chosen a secluded 'tower' over the superficialities of Bohemia to play out the drama of his life. Llewelyn: the ill-fated last Prince of Wales, the name of Thomas's son, and Loss: that of his Welsh cultural heritage, apparently sold 'down the swanny' for fame. Bohemian he may not entirely be, but a player whose shifting role-playing also culminated in his settling at Laugharne, home of the little boat ferry, and ultimately the tower of his mind, where he happily lived to the exclusion of all other cultural and political concerns. Arguably in the eyes of Jones, Thomas used Wales as an Anglophone playground as much as Loss does (although unlike Thomas the fictional character retires from London's Bohemia to Wales to play the part of 'martyr' and humbly 'serve the people' [*CS*, 309] after a brush with death). Jones's idea of Thomas is again framed: he is both crony and foe, he is both fellow satirist and the satirised, and this characterises the dilemma of his double. There is a very fine line between Jones's respect and admiration for Thomas and his disdain for what he represents[41] – a disdain that is never really acknowledged by Jones, but which often becomes starkly apparent in his work. It is this fine line that is being traversed in the characterisation of the 'The Tower of Loss' (*CS*, 294-317) as Jones creates from his friend an ambiguous figure, one who is neither innocent nor guilty. This I suspect is why he could never fully understand Dylan Thomas, because he could never allow himself to see him clearly. Any fully formed idea of him fragmented against Jones's own desire to find in him an identical double,

an ideal such as Gronow that he could aspire to, even though Thomas actually transgressed much that Jones held fundamentally dear and unmovable. Thomas cannot be conceived whole by a nature that is at once as generous and unyielding as that of Jones. An interesting tangent, too weighty for inclusion in this chapter, would be to explore if this is why the figure of the 'strange friend', the double, appears so frequently in Jones's texts. This dark twinning can be seen in the friendship between Karl and Dewi in *The Island of Apples*, and in the odd relationship between the pair in the short story 'Jordan'. It is a duality that approaches duel, one that transgresses the usual language of friendship and strays into a homoeroticism that has not gone critically unnoticed,[42] but has remained unexamined in the context of Jones's personal relationship with Thomas. It certainly transforms the nature of the doubles and the sub-textual shadows that are under consideration in this thesis, and the repressions that are broached in this chapter.

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The question of how far one can accurately conceive another (and indeed the idea of erotic doubles) leads quite opportunely to the all too brief consideration of how and why Jones creates his 'idea' of Thomas through the recognisable parlance of the Romantic poets. In *The Dragon has Two Tongues* Jones notably re-imagines his enthrallment with Thomas in terms that owe much to Coleridge in *Biographia Literaria* when describing his own friendship with Wordsworth.

> Judgement indeed was hardly involved in this strange and overwhelming experience. The effect of these poems was like an enchantment going far

> beyond the usual pleasure which one expects from poetry. I knew with absolute certainty that this was poetry. (*DTT*, 181)

> I shall hardly forget the sudden effect produced on my mind, by his recitation of a manuscript poem, which still remains unpublished, but of which the stanza and tone of style were the same as those of 'The Female Vagrant'...made so unusual an impression on my feelings immediately, and subsequently on my judgment. [43]

The dynamics of the literary friendship between Jones and Thomas and Coleridge and Wordsworth are certainly comparable, and it would also be fair to say that Jones's own saturation in the works of the Romantics has coloured his interpretation of a friendship which had such strong reverberations of the earlier and iconic instance of poetic doppelgängers. How far Jones perceives himself as Coleridge to Thomas's Wordsworth when writing his own kind of *Biographia Literaria* in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* would be an interesting avenue to explore, as would how far he is conscious of rejecting this doubling when he denies the 'judgement' that Coleridge so insistently and characteristically propounds. Or is this simply an instance of the intertext in action, proving the impossibility of writing without implicating the words of another text, so that echoes are always being unintentionally generated?[44] The issue of poetic 'judgement' is also raised by Thomas himself in the letter quoted earlier in the chapter. Whether to judge poetry or simply to feel it is a particularly Romantic dilemma, which both Thomas and Jones appear to have inherited. Their similarity in this particular and profound instance is not one that either seems to recognise or give much credit to. In fact Jones often tends to project much of what is

English about the 'Anglo-Welsh' onto Thomas,[45] despite the fact that English Romanticism and its models, tropes and dilemmas produce a discourse which has particular resonance for the first Anglo-Welsh writers.

Thomas dares to pursue the Romantic model of poetic solitude, the voice that stands isolated, outside its community, but this is exactly the desire that Jones represses as he becomes more committed to the Welsh-language traditions which are necessarily antagonistic. Jones never fully shakes off the hold of the English Romantics over him and thus creates a schism in his cultural and literary allegiances that he repeatedly struggles with in his poetry. Jones perceives that Thomas never struggles in this manner and that which makes them different thus also becomes an occasion for envy. Jones encapsulates his dilemma in his chapter on Thomas without admitting just how he suffers it. Instead he considers how poetic solitude proved terminal for Thomas.

> This question of the poet and his community I find interesting, and I think it important. I sometimes wonder if the powerful self-destructive impulse in Dylan's life was not somehow mixed up with it, with his sense of being cut off, with having rejected one community and not having found another to take its place. (*DTT*, 176)

Jones understands Thomas to be one who unequivocally and relentlessly strikes down all the cultural and religious associations that would constrain his mind and his art, thus emancipating his art from the cultural complications that possess Jones in his writing. The frequent recourse Jones makes in his early poems to the observance of

birds flying without rule, free to soar above the community from which the voice below cannot defect,[46] reveals a preoccupation with the self-enforced limitations of poetic vision that stands in stark contrast with the boundaries that Thomas is apparently able to transgress imaginatively every time he writes. When Jones utilises the bird as a means of expressing this sense of restriction it is not an innocent choice of trope as the image is also a favourite of the Welsh poets such as Dafydd ap Gwilym that Jones admires so. The messages that Jones's birds carry are not those of love, but of frustrated compromise, as the sublime heights that they could aspire towards are curtailed by the presence always of the observer beneath withdrawing his gaze and his far-flung flight back from the edges of vision into the clumsy embrace of life below. In contrast to this, in Thomas, Jones observes the antithesis to his own frustration. He sees a poet who is detached from the confines of community and free to explore the limits of his own poetic vision: in short, a poet in the Romantic tradition.

'Fern Hill' illustrates just how Thomas romanticises the Wales he is also as willing to castigate, and that Jones could have had this poem in mind when he writes 'Cwmcelyn', seems plausible if one assumes that it was written after that of Thomas's in 1945. It is integral to the mechanics of Jones's poem that he deliberately fails in his attempt to achieve something comparable because he cannot bring himself to romanticise a working farm in the same way. Both writers refer to their ancestral homesteads, in Carmarthenshire, where they spent childhood vacations. It is significant that both writers poeticise these parallel memories of family farms and yet they also become the site at which the two writers diverge. Whilst Thomas celebrates the naïve and childish vision in a Romantic rendition of remembered innocence,

Jones resists this and attempts to differentiate himself from Thomas's Anglicised stance. Thomas opens the second stanza with the following lines:

> And as I was green and carefree, famous among the barns
> about the happy yard and singing as the farm was home[47]

His farm is repeatedly 'happy', full of light, and a heavily sentimentalised reincarnation of Eden ('it was Adam' / 'the first spinning place'). It is a place where the experienced and embittered mind can take rest and find respite and/or forgetfulness. However, for Jones such utilisation of well worn poetic motifs is reductive and violates the lives it observes. Even the mere mobilisation of poetry to silence rather than express the community is riddled with a guilt that is for Jones a matter for ethics as much as it is for art. If Jones were to romanticise his ancestral farm 'Cwmcelyn' in such a way, and to impose his own personal memories and removed observations onto the people who laboured there and thus obscure their history (those who really were 'huntsman and herdsman'), then he would call into question his cultural *and* moral obligations as poet. To permit his sentiments to aggrandize himself at the expense of the whole as Thomas so heedlessly and joyfully does ('I was Prince of the apple towns'/ 'I lordly had the trees and leaves…') would be a betrayal of the people, Jones's politics and therefore his very self.

> Let me not, in the repose of this sunlight
> Tranquil on the fields and on heaving estuary, see
> Their symbol and image; or falsify
> Toiling and poverty, rebellion

And bitterness of theirs to a pastoral

Heaven. (*CP*, 45)

However, he is forced to repress his initial instinct to arrive at this conclusion. It is only through succumbing to the possibility of the pastoral vision in the first stanza, that he reaches this realisation and it is one that is not sought by the 'blissful', 'tranquil' and remote voice of the opening lines. The 'Buzzard's eye view' is one of languorous removal, but once Cwmcelyn the farm is espied, the cost of such private and wild sight becomes a weight that draws the eye closer to earthly (if not 'earthy') duties.

The second stanza opens 'Now, the griefs of the homestead are mine'. Purely through the passive act of observation, the suffering burdens of the real community force themselves as fiercely as an inevitable duty onto the watcher. The obligation of pain that the voice must accept as a mere consequence of sharing in beauty of the natural scene, is a rejection of romanticism ('Defilement was theirs, and folly'). The poetic voice seemingly cannot play a part in the traditional and consoling opposition of country and city, because suffering and shame, and not health and innocence, characterise the rural world. Despite this harsh re-visioning of the rural Welsh 'homestead', the pull of Romanticism, in the sense of the Wordsworthian Eden, the 'simple' rustic life, is still sustained by the last sentence of the stanza ('And yet/between them and the Eternal, a harmony') and thus Jones's struggle with the idea of beauty which is no longer a valid truth in the Keatsian sense re-emerges unresolved. Thomas's own lines 'The beauty of the spent lie' seem to resound meaningfully, even as the cornfields once 'silent and sunburnt' now become

'swarthy' and the gull's 'blissful' wings become purposeless and 'dawdling', because even if the country pastoral is but 'symbol and image', without it, how do we understand the 'acrid city'? What language is left for comprehending the difference between the two communities? It is the 'ghostly reapers' of Cwmcelyn that have to be the measure of the 'city's empty hearted wilderness', or 'demoniac folly' becomes all. It is only this 'spent lie', this idea or sensation of 'beauty', that can redeem, only the 'long generations' that can 'arraign them' and avert 'despair'. Thus Jones responds to Thomas's rambunctious and indulgent pastoral, that in its preoccupation with and celebration of the precious scarcity of innocent joy is truly Romantic, by reluctantly yet dutifully questioning the whole notion of reducing an entire rural world to a metaphysical metaphor. The paradox is that in debunking one metaphor he fails to address its obverse: the notion of the city as 'hell' remains unchallenged, and the binary dynamic is still in place.

In *The Dragon has Two Tongues* Jones laments the fact that Thomas's lack of communal connection potentially plays a role in his physical unravelling. He also observes how it contributed to Thomas's increasing abstraction, as subjectivity itself becomes as much a prison as any external commitment could. This is perfectly encapsulated in Thomas's short story, 'The Orchards', as the ostracised voice above the town cannot perceive anything outside itself and its creation

> Peace like a simile, lay over the roofs of the town. 'Image, all image', cried Marlais, stepping through the window... Below him in a world of words, men on their errands...the toy of the town was at his feet ...[48]

That the unrestrained Romantic imagination is in the twentieth century a place of uncertainty, paranoia and madness is evident in much of the early poetic-prose that interestingly does not always impress Jones. It would seem that in locating the point at which Thomas's imagination destabilises itself and becomes overly obscure, Jones finds a means of vindicating himself and his own temperate anchorage in the Welsh literary heritage.

> The idea of the wild and petted man apart seemed to remain with him for a long time, perhaps until his death, the man from whom ordinary responsibility and participation...cannot be expected, who possesses nothing, no religion, no politics, no community, no thought, no nothing, only that one gift which marks him off from the majority of his fellow men. (*DTT*, 175)

How far Jones is actually projecting his own idea of the Romantic poet to which he also personally aspires, onto Thomas in order to distance himself from his own weaknesses becomes a pertinent issue in this extract. In order to negotiate their differences and similarities, in order to find a delineating line between his idea of himself and that of Thomas, Jones has unconsciously and subtly allied himself with the Welsh literary community and the non-Romantic ideal of the poet, and placed Thomas as the opposing other, despite the fact that the Romantic proclivity of Thomas is also one Jones is subject to. Whether what he observes of Thomas is right or wrong becomes irrelevant because again the idea of Thomas has become the instrument in a movement that is ostensibly political due to the nature and production

of the text, but in actuality obliquely personal because Jones has chosen to elucidate and expound the politics of the text through the lens of autobiography.

Thus, Thomas becomes a figure both for envy and of alarm for Jones. When he strays too far into poetic subjectivity as is his wont, Thomas becomes an ominous double, a doppelgänger warning of what Jones too could become if he completely lifted anchor. Rather like an eerie, exaggerated and foreboding Spectre of Brocken, an enormous disturbing shadow cast only by the small self, Thomas the Romanticised isolated poet represents the dangerous aspects of himself that Jones perceives and struggles to repress. A little truth becomes a vast fiction. In fact, one could argue that the entire chapter on Thomas in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* is not simply an exercise in cultural negotiation in which Thomas is the controversial currency of exchange but is a more personal game of mirrors and reflection in which everything is 'echo and mirror seeking of itself'.[49] That by analysing Thomas, Jones is also sub-textually honing and defining the idea of his self against the text becomes increasingly apparent. Thomas's Romantic exclusion from the Welsh tradition becomes the option with which to purchase his own inclusion. It would also seem that Jones, in the footsteps of Coleridge, can go some way to counteract any perceived poetic imbalance via a prose in which the part of admiring inferior is sincerely adopted whilst his comments are politely but subtly and ruthlessly critical.

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This is by no means a fully comprehensive account of how these two writers consciously and unconsciously interacted. The area has proved unexpectedly fertile,

and new avenues have appeared throughout the research process, which have had to be sidelined. Even the areas addressed seem to proliferate with suggestion on re-reading. For example, it is probably no accident that after meeting Thomas and digesting his 'advice' regarding writing for the workers,[50] Jones should go on to write the short story 'I was born in the Ystrad Valley'. The matter of pre-war coincidence that results in both Thomas and Jones making a dramatic switch from experimentalism to writing 'a series of short stories about childhood' (*DTT*, 180), remains unexplored, as does the interesting matter of 'The Burning Baby'.

> What I do recall vividly is the Aberystwyth hotel bedroom where we spent the night. Dylan lay smoking cigarettes on the bed while I told him a story. It was new to him, and he was enthralled by it, because the matter, the substance, of what I was saying was such, he immediately and instinctively recognised, as would supply the material for one of his own short stories – the poetic-fantastic type he was writing then. The story was the true one, well-known in Wales, about Dr. William Price, the druidical Chartist of Llantrisant, Glamorgan, the nudist mountain chanter and wearer of hieratical coms, who at eighty-four burned the body of his illegitimate son Jesus Christ on the hilltop. (*DTT*, 178)

One of the few clearly identifiable instances of direct influence from Jones to Thomas is this exchange of Welsh history in Aberystwyth when the two writers went to visit Caradoc Evans. Thomas relegates the event to silence despite rapidly 'gothicising' the tale of Price in his grotesque story 'The Burning Baby' (it was published in 1936). As I stated in the introduction, such instances of direct influence have not been pertinent

to the specific purpose of this chapter, hence its reluctant exclusion. The shared psycho-geography and how they reform such similar Welsh terrains (rural and municipal) in their creative work and yet mobilise their cultural binary dichotomies so differently is worthy of copious amounts of close textual reading that this chapter could not possibly begin to contemplate. Other potentially rich areas include their use of the grotesque; why Surrealism could be a method they both seem to mediate, and whether it is even accurate to describe their repeated utilisation of the grotesque and mutating 'random' images as Surrealism. The consideration of Romanticism that has been included here is a brief excursion into vast common space between both writers, and one I intend to revisit in subsequent chapters. Suffice therefore to say, in this instance, that there is ground enough to stake a firm claim for the impact of their early friendship on both writers. Fertile antagonisms, false perceptions, and romanticised projections all contribute to the understanding and misunderstanding of each other and each other's work. The way in which this manifests itself textually – however obliquely in the creative work, stridently in the letters (themselves unreliable and often fictional texts) and disingenuously in the prose work – reveals two figures constantly held in a shifting poise and counterpoise that is strangely compelling.

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[1] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (New York: OUP, 1973, 1997) 56

[2] Harold Bloom, *A Map of Misreading* (Oxford: OUP, 2003) 18

[3] See Roland Mathias, 'Editorial', *Anglo-Welsh Review,* Vol. 17, No. 39 (1968) 3-5. Mathias states 'we have had time to get used to the fact that Vernon Watkins is dead. Time enough too, to draw all the obvious parallels with Dylan Thomas, with whom Vernon was once so intimate'. Evidence of the Vernon Watkins-Dylan Thomas friendship includes the publication of Vernon Watkins, *Poems for Dylan* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2003). See also Gwen Watkins, *Portrait of a Friend* (Llandysul : Gomer Press, 1983). Here the wife of Vernon Watkins gives her own opinions on the relationship of her husband with Dylan Thomas.

[4] See Tony Brown's introduction to his edition, Glyn Jones, *Collected Stories* (Cardiff: UWP, 2001). He observes that 'Perhaps more than anything this was what Glyn Jones found exciting and liberating in Thomas's work: that one need not be bound by decorums of register and of English literary practice. In the work of this other young Welsh writer Jones found an echo of his own fascination with the novelty of English words and confirmation of the startling effects that could be achieved when incongruous words flashed together in unconventional ways', (*CS, xxxiv*) .

[5] Another vital reason that Bloom's theories could not fully explain this relationship is that there is a cultural dimension to their attitudes to one another that is not included in Bloom's primarily aesthetic model. In Bloom's theory of poetry the poets are abstracted from their cultural and historical

environments and the struggle to throw off the influence of a precursor is primarily confined to the text. In contrast what occurs between Thomas and Jones is never just a textual wrangling, although this is present, as the dynamics of a divided culture are also ventriloquised through their antagonisms towards one another.

[6] Nicholas Royle, *The Uncanny* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2003).

[7] See Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence* (Oxford: OUP, 1997) 53. Of Mann, Bloom notes, "in his diary, he wrote: 'To be reminded that one is not alone in the world – always unpleasant,'" and then he adds: 'It is another version of Goethe's question: "do we then live if others live"'. Subsequently he writes: 'when a poet experiences incarnation *qua* poet, he experiences anxiety necessarily towards any danger that might *end him* as a poet' (58).

[8] See Paul Ferris ed. *The Collected Letters of Dylan Thomas* (London: Dent 1985) 198. 'Last week-end I spent in Aberystwyth with Caradoc Evans. He's a great fellow. We made a tour of the pubs in the evening , drinking to the eternal damnation of the Almighty & the sooon-to-be-hoped-for destructions of the tin bethels.'

[9] Letter to 'Glyn Jones (March 1934)', *CL*, 120.

[10] See letter to 'Glyn Jones (mid April 1934)' *CL* 141-2; letter to 'Glyn Jones (?early July 1934)' *CL,* 171-2; letter to 'Glyn Jones (?early August 1934)', *CL,* 191; letter to 'Glyn Jones (September 1934)', *CL,* 193-4; letter to 'Glyn Jones (March 1935)', *CL*, 213-4.

[11] See letter to 'Glyn Jones (?late July 1934)', *CL*, 187-8, and the three letters to 'Glyn Jones (December 1934), (26 December 1934), and (about 28 December 1934)' *CL*, 205-07

[12] Letter to 'Glyn Jones (December 1936)' *CL,* 272-3.

[13] See letter to 'Thomas Taig (23 August 1939)', where he recommends Jones's work as material for dramatic presentation to the Swansea University College lecturer.

[14] See letter to Vernon Watkins (postmarked 25 August 1939), where he criticises Jones's wife ('sly, mean, stupid and shapeless') and Jones himself ('his gentleness has grown in like a soft, jelly-like nail'). *CL,* 453.

[15] See Dylan Thomas, 'Ears in the Turrets hear,' *Collected Poems* (London: Phoenix, 2000) 49-50, and 'Love in the Asylum,' both of which compound and confound psychic spaces with literal rooms. See also Marlais's rooftop world as code for psychological writing space in the short story 'The Orchards', *Collected Stories* (London: Everyman, 1984, 1993) 42-9 and of course the short story 'The Lemon', (56-66), in which a tower becomes the location for a mind attempting to find its true 'I' and extrapolate itself from various sinister doubles. Also worth looking at in this context is 'The Mouse and the Woman', 74-88.

[16] Ibid. 56-66.

[17] There is opportunity here to utilise Thomas's own creative texts to substantiate this presence of Jones and his cultural 'type' as a threatening double that Thomas wrangles with. However, for the purposes of this chapter I had to limit the reading to Jones.

[18] 'Alcwyn continued talking in the same strain, urging me, as far as I could understand him, to decide on the sort of personality I was going to present to the people around me'. (*VCV,* 135) Other observations occur on page 156. 'I was never sure to what extent his actions were spontaneous and to what extent calculated...' Via Alcwyn, Jones engages with the, now established, notion that Thomas is a chameleon character. The way in which Alcwyn disappears suddenly and reappears just as suddenly in the text seems also to echo the shifting nature of the friendship between the two writers. See also *VCV,* 239 for their final parting. Here, Trystan is indifferently left in his wake.

[19]Glyn Jones, 'Notebook I: Anglo-Welsh papers', NLW MS Box 20717C. Glyn Jones Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth.

[20] That Jones uses 'strange' to describe Thomas on so many occasions, and 'fascinating' on almost as many more, advertises the otherness, even other-worldliness that Jones seems to perceive in or project on him. 'Strange' is a word which has both innocent and hostile associations that can evoke novelties and curses. Its meaning is certainly one that cannot be theoretically innocent after the critical exploration of otherness in E. W. Said, *Orientalism: Western concepts of the Orient* (London: Penguin, 2003); J. Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves,* Trans. Leon. S. Roudiez (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991) and H.K. Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London: Routledge, 1991).

[21] Harold Bloom, *The Anxiety of Influence,* (New York, Oxford: OUP, 1973,1997) 94.

[22] Ibid. 96.

[23] Sioned Davies, trans. *The Mabinogion* (Oxford: OUP, 2007).

[24] Ibid. 185.

[25] Dylan Thomas, 'The Force that through the Green Fuse', *Collected Poetry* (London: Phoenix, 2000) 13.

[26] Ibid. 23-24.
[27] "Freud, unheimlich, here in his insight maintains that 'every emotional affect whatever its quality, is transformed by repression into morbid anxiety'", see *The Anxiety of Influence,* 77.
[28] This is quoted by Meic Stephens in the notes to "Sande" (*CP,* 139).
[29] See particularly the first chapter 'Poetic Origns and Final Phases'.
[30] Donald H. Reiman and Sharon B. Powers eds., *Shelley's Poetry and Prose* (New York: Norton, 1977) 390-406.
[31] Ibid. 396, line 352.
[32] Ibid. 406, line 478.
[33] Saunders Lewis, 'The Carcass', *Selected Poems,* trans. Joseph P. Clancy (Cardiff: UWP, 1993) 13.
[34] Ibid. 10-12.
[35] Saunders Lewis, 'Is there an Anglo-Welsh Literature: being the annual lecture delivered to the branch on December 10th, 1938' (Caerdydd : Urdd Graddedigion Prifysgol Cymru, 1939) 5. 'There is nothing hyphenated about him, he belongs to the English'.
[36] See the chapter on 'Dylan Thomas' in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* for a more detailed description of these two shared experiences.
[37] 'he knew very little about the mining valleys, the North or the cultural life of Welsh Wales' (*DTT,* 174).
[38] See *The Dragon has Two Tongues,* 174 for an extended observation of just how Welsh writers are misread by non-Welsh critics.
[39] See the chapter entitled 'Dylan Thomas' in *The Dragon has Two Tongues* (161-191).
[40] 'The Tower of Loss' a speech located in his papers at the National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth. See also the chapter cited above, (*DTT,* 177) for examples of how this implicates Dylan Thomas. There is reference to 'his new Bohemian milieu' in London.
[41] 'The Bohemianism of poets is an English-French phenomenon. In Wales the typical poet is a University lecturer whose wife teaches in the local Welsh school and who has one son and one daughter who become lawyers, doctors or tv employees'. ('What was before the Big Bang?' 41). His papers also reveal numerous asides that betray his antipathy towards the bohemian 'other'. For example 'The culture of cities – places like the left bank, Greenwich Village ... Fitzrovia – abhorrent to me – the culture that turns people into bums and deadbeats. I have a stubborn belief that culture ought somehow to make us better human beings and not turn us into bums and deadbeats...Accumulation of culture – culture clots – a thrombosis of culture.' See also *DTT* 189, 'His left wing sympathies were largely, I think, an expression of personal rebelliousness, a desire common to young writers, to be on the *anti* side. I never saw him as much of a co-operative doer, a man of action. There was, I think, a strain of passivity in his nature'. Cross reference this with Loss and suddenly the subtly disguised similarities I am referring to emerge. That his perception of Thomas as an opposing 'other' is an access point for the more general cultural antagonisms that map his psyche is latent.
[42] See Tony Brown, 'Glyn Jones and the 'Uncanny', *Almanac: A Yearbook of Welsh Writing in English (2007-8)* 89-114, an incisive study in which he explores the homoerotic and 'homosocial' elements of Jones's writing as repressed emanations of the 'Uncanny'.
[43] Samuel Coleridge, *Biographia Literaria* (London: Everyman, 1997) 40.
[44] See M. Foucault, *The Archaeology of Knowledge* (London: Routledge, 2002) and his now widely disseminated idea of a network that connects all textual productions as integral nodes (Foucault writes, 'it is caught up in a system of references to other books, other sentences, it is a node within a network'[5]).
[45]'Dylan Thomas – alas! The English language casts over the Celtic peoples a great spell. Dylan was son of an English master who himself wanted to be a poet – what sort? – an English one I take it'. (Notebook, 'The Dragon has Two Tongues', NLW MS 20717C. Glyn Jones Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth). Subsequently, in the same notebook, he writes more generally, 'The English language casts a powerful spell over the Celtic mind'. Even the use of "Celtic" seems to substantiate this "powerful spell" and reveals that Jones judges it, and Thomas, from a far from objective location.
[46] See: 'Ship' (*CP, 6-7*), 'And Gulls lifting and falling on their way to the sea / seeking a loophole in the Wall of Wind'; and 'Dock' (*CP,* 7) 'Only one watcher herring-gull, turning / High above the wetted town...'; 'Gull' (*CP,* 10-11); 'Shadow' (*CP,* 11-2).
[47] Dylan Thomas, 'Fern Hill', *Collected Poems* (London: Phoenix, 2000) 134-5.
[48] Dylan Thomas, 'The Orchards', *Collected Stories* (London: Everyman, 1993) 44.
[49] S.T. Coleridge, 'Frost at Midnight', *Samuel Taylor Coleridge – The Major Works,* ed. H.L. Jackson (Oxford: OUP, 2008) 87.

[50] 'And as for the Workers! People have been trying to write to them for years. And they still don't care a damn. The trouble is that in attempting to write for the workers one generally writes *down.* The thing to do is to bring the Workers *up* to what one is writing'. (*Letters*, 141-142).

Negotiating with the *Beirdd*

Yes alright, because I use the English language as a lover 'uses' love, I am the heir of Chaucer, Shakespeare, Pope, but in this silly world that's not enough for my heart's good. I must also justify my work to the ghosts of Taliesin, Cynddelw Brydydd Mawr, Gruffudd ab yr Ynad Coch, Dafydd Nanmor and Guto'r Glyn must acknowledge me in heaven. I don't want Dafydd ap Gwilym to lump me with "Higgin and Jenkin and Jack", the three Englishmen snoring in the pub, bothered for their packs and fearful.[1]

My pathway lies between these hills, all close
Together huddled like creatures crouched in sleep
('Poet and Peasant', *CP*, 181)

The first passage belongs to Tony Conran as he reviews Anglo-Welsh writing for the second time in *Poetry Wales,* in 1969, after the decision was made to 'throw open the doors of *Yr Academi Gymreig'* to those writers he considers in his article. The significance of Conran's need to 'justify' his 'work to the ghosts of Taliesin' et. al. becomes increasingly relevant to this thesis when one considers that Glyn Jones's poems 'You, Taliesin' (*CP,* 71-73) and 'Henffych, Dafydd' (*CP*, 86-8) are both attempts at such a justification, and were published relatively soon after (four years). The second quotation is much earlier, and belongs to Glyn Jones's early period of tentative experimentation. The theme is that Romantic conflict between art and life,

(solitude and community) that has tormented many poets. It is probably fair to say that, at the time of writing, the Welsh cultural situation would not be profoundly governing Jones's creative consciousness; however the cultural implications of being a Welsh writer using the English language can already be read in the sinister nature of the 'hills ...huddled like creatures crouched in sleep'. The sense that something vast and terrifying could be disturbed by the solitary walker seeking safe, but blind, passage through Wales is as palpable as those hills themselves.

The forging of the difficult 'pathway' between cultures and identities creates certain tensions that characterise Jones's work and it is how these conflicts are manifested in various forms, attitudes and voices throughout his work, that is the guiding premise of this thesis. In proof of this, there are a number of skeins that can be lifted from the weft of the last chapter to weave into the fabric of the next, the first being the way in which Jones negotiates his cultural hybridity and how he struggles to find a space in which to work within the overlap of the two linguistic cultural communities of Wales. That Jones defined himself against Thomas partly by his loyalty to the Welsh Language culture can also be taken as a more general indication of how he tried to position himself against the overbearing literary establishment of England and the culture it embodied. The following analysis will examine one way in which he navigates such an inter-cultural engagement: through direct and indirect invocation of iconic *beirdd* (Welsh-language poets) in his own work. The second skein that strays beyond the selvage of the previous chapter is the relevance that Bloom's theories of anxiety have when considering the complexity of the relationship revealed when Jones seeks connection with earlier Welsh language writers. As is well known, at differing times in his life Jones discovers doubles in three early Welsh-

language writers - Taliesin, Dafydd ap Gwilym and Llywarch Hen – and it is primarily such great strict-metre poets from the early Christian centuries to the sixteenth century that are considered in this chapter. This doubling forces into relief the same unresolved tension between English Romanticism and the Welsh language literature tradition that existed between Jones and his idea of Thomas. For Jones the call of duty towards what is forgotten and must be recalled clashes with the instinct of a poet born into another language and thus another literature. His aspiration to hybridity are both expressed in and tested by his admiration for these Welsh poets. As may be intuited from this introduction, the work of Homi Bhabha will subtly inform the following discourse.

Tied as it is, in the ways indicated, to the previous chapter, this chapter will primarily be concerned with why and how the great fourteenth century poet Dafydd ap Gwilym is invoked, idealised, rewritten and also questioned by Jones's work. It will examine how far he refigures him, recreating him through his own individual misreading, and how far he engages with the culturally constructed modern myth of Dafydd ap Gwilym as much as the writing itself. Jones frequently invokes individuals such as ap Gwilym and Taliesin, drawing them into a personal conversation; yet how far are these figures actually recognised by him as 'individuals'? To what extent does their name denote an individual or represent a concept of authorship that is less prescriptive than that available to Jones in the twentieth century? (For example, the *Addwynau*[2] is now believed to be a later imitation not from the pen of Taliesin, yet signed as such).This chapter will consider the styles (language, imagery, metaphor) and forms (*marwnad* [elegy] and panegyric) that Jones borrows from them and the Welsh literature tradition, noting how he imitates, reforms and even subverts them. It

will address the difficulties inherent in such trans-cultural homage, which are not simply temporal but ideological, political, and cultural. For example, the chapter will address the inconsistencies that arise when a medieval voice embedded in a conservative and aristocratic feudal system becomes attractive to a modern poet who has been forged in the egalitarian fire of the passionate socialism that characterised South Wales in the 1930s. It will consider the conflict between the role of the poet in early Welsh culture and in the anglicised industrial culture of twentieth century South Wales. It will consider the division that exists between the independent, often isolated and anglicised voice, and the communal voice of the *bardd*. It will examine the nature of the early twentieth-century ideas of tradition, particularly those represented by T.S.Eliot, and the Welsh 'medievalism' expounded at much the same time by Saunders Lewis through which inevitable lens Jones himself approaches these writers and their period. It will ask whether it is in fact their more immediate and urgent conservatism he questions through the conversations with the ancients, and whether these conversations are his more indirect means of engaging with more modern voices; an appropriation of earlier voices to question the nature of more urgent and uncompromising nationalisms? Also considered will be the betrayal of the *taeogion* (the medieval – and modern – social underclass), the impossible clash of ancient feudal conservatism with the socialism of the southern Welsh Valley culture that Jones feels compelled to represent if he is to be a true community *bardd*.

The discussion will throughout seek out reflections of modernity in the ancient voices that interested Jones. How far, for example did he perceive in the innovative language of Dafydd ap Gwilym and the *cywydd* form an earlier type of the experimental modernist imagism that he himself played with in his own particular

brand of 'logopaeic dance'.[3] How far did ap Gwilym's location in an arguably increasingly plural society open to foreign influences mirror and indeed vindicate Jones's own cultural situation? How far did Llywarch Hen watching his kingdom and family fall around him reflect the Wales of 'Shader Twm' in Jones's last unfinished work *Seven Keys to Shaderdom*? This plaintive and rhapsodic sequence also contains fragments of Taliesin and ap Gwilym and deserves the intensive reading that is the substance of the next chapter as all influences, doubles and dilemmas are drawn together in this, the swan-song of a mind always navigating a 'pathway...between these hills, all close together huddled like creatures crouched in sleep'(*CS,* 181). Llywarch Hen is the only suitable lens through which to refract Glyn Jones's final howl of incomprehension, not least in the face of an often incoherent nation, and a mind that can see neither whole nor clearly. Considering the plurality of Welsh histories in the late twentieth century, Wales *can* only be refigured in fragments, in shades, and codes; in vaguely discursive and indeed musical 'keys' as this poem shifts from rhapsodic movement to movement.

This is not uncharted territory. The insistent tattoo of the Welsh Beirdd behind the work of many Welsh writers in English has been heard before. M. Wynn Thomas has set the bar for the 'Hidden Attachments'[4] between the two traditions. Jason Walford Davies's study of how the Welsh poetic tradition informs the work of R.S. Thomas is also extremely suggestive of the cross cultural mechanisms that inform the interpretation of other poets.[5] Emyr Humphreys' *The Taliesin Tradition* is a cultural construction that follows the voice of the *bardd* through time, transgressing language borders as well as crossing the divide between secularism and nonconformity: he reveals a continuity that requires no cross-cultural 'negotiation', as

the independent 'Welsh' spirit it expresses transcends any linguistic dichotomies.[6] In fact, establishing these echoes, patterns and exchanges has been an essential process of rooting the early 'Anglo-Welsh' voices in the history of the country of which they already believed themselves to be a part. Refuting the influential claims of Saunders Lewis that the emergent 'Anglo-Welsh' writers of the 1930s had little or no knowledge of their Welsh-language heritage has been vital to the explosive discourse that has evolved since that 'first flowering'. In fact the *beirdd* and those particular seminal bardic figures, shortly to be re-examined, have been vital in the construction of Welsh national identity since late eighteenth-century antiquarianism inspired Iolo Morganwg to forge history for the sake of glorifying a lapsed nationhood.[7] To engage with the Welsh bardic tradition is immediately to enter the discourse of Welsh nationhood, as much as it is to lay a claim to the memories and history of a culture and a language. Katie Trumpener's excellent study, *Bardic Nationalism*, traces the Romantic reclamation of the bardic voices as tools of nationhood and one can perceive this process continuing within the Welsh- language discourse throughout the Celtic twilight, and beyond.[8]

At the same time that the early twentieth-century Welsh-language establishment begins to look back beyond the nineteenth century to rescue the integrity of the poetic tradition from the hands of non-conformity, a comparable redressing was occurring throughout English Literature. It was a particular characteristic of modernism that it looked back beyond Romanticism for guiding influences. In search of forms and languages that were 'uncorrupted' by recent sentimentalities and linguistic excesses, writers such as Pound and Eliot pillaged models from other cultures and ancient texts to create a new, invigorated non-

romanticised sense of tradition. Eliot's main concern in his essay 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' is to relegate the great 'I' of late Romantic tradition to a humbler and less conspicuous position, and to place it subserviently within the confines of a tradition that is as defining as any organic environment upon a biological entity.[9] In Wales at the same time T. Robin Chapman has observed that Saunders Lewis is already turning to the medieval period as one that symbolises the order and establishes the tradition/canon that should serve as a model for twentieth-century Wales.[10] It is between the influence of these two seminal critics, representatives of two literary traditions, and two differing definitions of those traditions, that Jones is situated as he begins to experiment with his own creativity in the 1930s. Finding a space to write and a language to write with is an inevitable challenge that is riddled with antagonisms.

Eliot maintains that being part of a tradition and history is vital for the significance of the individual poet:

> The historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order. This historical sense, which is a sense of the timeless as well as of the temporal and of the timeless and of the temporal together, is what makes a writer traditional. And it is at the same time what makes a writer most acutely conscious of his place in time, of his contemporaneity.[11]

Without this 'historical sense', the modern poet cannot appreciate his modernity or his innovation. Eliot is not overtly nationalistic in his definition of 'tradition'. For him it is a 'sense', a means of situating the interior self in relation to the exterior world as organically as sight, smell and touch. Both Eliot and Lewis refer to the 'order' that tradition impresses upon literature. This suggests that everything has its place and should have, even if, for Eliot, it is an order in a constant state of transformation as the introduction of the new necessarily rewrites and reorders what has passed. Such a transformation cannot be allowed by Lewis, who is concerned to establish a historical Welsh canon, and cannot allow it to be disrupted by new voices such as those of the 'Anglo-Welsh'. The pressures of a lapsing language, a minority status, and diminishing national cohesion do not allow Lewis such an expansive and inclusive attitude towards tradition. Preservation requires sacrifice, and continuity necessitates rigorous standards and cultural exclusion.

Judged by Eliot's measure of tradition - 'it cannot be inherited, and if you want it you must obtain it by great labour' - Glyn Jones has sufficient 'historical sense' to belong to Wales. He is even a writer who cannot be so easily dismissed by Lewis's claim that the 'Anglo-Welsh' are ignorant of their Welsh heritage. By the time he was beginning to emerge as a writer, Jones had already engaged sufficiently with his Welsh-language inheritance to undermine the universal claims made by his teacher, Saunders Lewis:

> As well as studying privately I joined a class run by one of my new friends, by then a teacher in Cardiff, to learn, or rather to relearn, to speak Welsh with greater ease; and later, classes in Welsh literature of various periods. (*DTT*, 35)

In his editorial notes in *The Dragon has Two Tongues*, Tony Brown records Jones attempting translations of Welsh poetry by the mid 1930s, and those published are mostly interpretations of Dafydd ap Gwilym, the fourteenth century figurehead who was to extend an influence over Jones that was to last a lifetime. Jones had made a concerted effort to reclaim his lost language, and with it the poetry and the memories of the nation that had been unintentionally forgotten. His early poetry reveals the strange collision of the two literary cultures Jones inhabits: 'Gerald's Wife' (*CP,* 168) is a ballad based on the Welsh tale of Nest; 'The Death of Prince Gronw' (*CP, 169)* again takes an anglicised form to engage imaginatively with the same tale; 'Young Brookeats in the Country' (*CP,* 191-5) is a strange fusion of influences as this rollicking tale conjoins the names of two English poets for its title and yet implicates Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem 'Trafferth mewn Tafarn' ('Trouble at a Tavern'[12]) by its content. It is in this early work that the colliding influences are most exposed. The Romantic bard, the voice of the English tradition, is situated next to more pertinent intrusions by the greatest of Welsh *beirdd* and the forgotten culture inscribed in his classical texts. Jones's conception of the *beirdd* is clearly still informed by the English appropriation of the term, although 'The Bards of the Western Mail' (*CP,* 190) does anticipate 'You, Taliesin' in its questioning of the romantic pursuit of beauty at the expense of reality. It is the sceptical mockery that reveals a mind not quite happy with his heroes and influences ('But in their innocence bards are blind/To all the rottenness that lies behind' [*CP,* 190]).

In this early work there is even the suggestion of resentment towards the Welsh tradition and its increasingly unyielding, demanding nature. In the poem

'Essyllt' (*CP*, 196-9), the disillusion Trystan expresses with the Arthurian world order indicates Jones's awareness that his position as a writer in Wales is uncertain and liminal. The fragility of an illegal love forced out of society is also explored in 'Enid', and the repetition of this theme of betrayal and exile has obvious resonances with what was rapidly becoming a very prescriptive Welsh-language establishment:

> Then I began to hate the heavy ways
> Of March and Arthur and the brotherhood,
> So strong for righteousness, when righteousness
> Meant their unchanging little scheme of laws.
> They thought their code eternal, not to be
> diminished or discarded finally
> for new conceptions far beyond their minds
> to welcome and apprehend. They were
> Content and zealous in a cause whose worth
> Was long expended, cherishing not the good
> But what was ancient and familiar. (*CP*, 197)

The significance of this criticism when translated into the modern predicament of 1930s Wales and the frustrating situation of Glyn Jones in it, is barely disguised by the Arthurian garb. The limitations of cultural rigidity ('their unchanging little scheme of laws'), the sense of being an outsider (an exile) because of preferences that are out of the individual's control (Love/Language), can be read in the frustrations of Trystan towards 'Arthur and the brotherhood'. The collision of individual desire and the demands of a community/nation are revealed in all its ugly truth. The betrayal of

Trystan by those pursuing their 'zealous...cause' is one that undermines 'the good', and deconstructs the meaning of 'righteousness' to the extent that the denial of Trystan's love becomes a question of morality. Equally the denial of the Anglo-Welsh writers by the Welsh literary establishment strays into the same theatre of ethics. To sacrifice the 'new' and 'conceptions far beyond their minds' for the sake of preserving the old could be seen as equally immoral and self-defeating. That the Arthurian legends were used so extensively in the Welsh literary revival of the late nineteenth/early twentieth century, as a vehicle for historical lament and resurgence cannot have escaped Jones's notice even at this early and experimental point in his literary career, and that Welsh language poems of this period, particularly T. Gwynn Jones's 'Argoed,' are suggested by lines such as 'They thought their code eternal'/ 'a cause whose worth was long expended' seems to me as good as certain.[13] That Jones also admired late-Victorian/Romantic English verse, which also pillaged the Arthurian tradition in a very different, decadent manner is also pertinent. These two culturally dichotomous influences offer a fascinating and fertile window into just how two traditions converge, tussle and reform in Jones's work.

The insistent haunting presence of Welsh poetry in Jones's work at this early stage in his career only serves to reiterate the importance of the later poems in which he directly challenges figures such as Taliesin and ap Gwilym. That these later poems are still characterised by these unresolved tensions reveals just how the divisions in Wales were played out repeatedly and compulsively (even convulsively) by Jones throughout his lifetime and his career. The fact that these symptoms of cultural disunity still preoccupied the voice of his final work in the 1990s is testament not only to the intensity of the Welsh predicament but to how it always provided the

cast for Jones's own identity as a writer. The weight of an 'incorrigibly plural'[14] incoherent history that refuses to settle into a stable form is the legacy that Jones struggled with both privately in his writing and publicly in his more political involvement with the literary establishment.

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Taking a brief Marxist stance is most illuminating when approaching the particular dilemma that preoccupies Jones when he confronts the traditional *beirdd* of Wales. The anxiety that his poems articulate as consequent to his instinctive celebration of the *bardd* reveal a voice troubled by the bias of the 'historical memory' the role demanded. To be accomplice in silence seems the inevitable consequence of his admiration. Walter Benjamin writes of history and its artefacts in his essay 'Theses on the Philosophy of History':

> They are called cultural treasures, and a historical materialist views them with cautious detachment...They owe their existence not only to the efforts of the great minds and talents who have created them, but also to the anonymous toil of their contemporaries.[15]

This 'cautious detachment' is exactly what is consciously mustered by Jones in much of the work under discussion in this chapter. The 'anonymous toil' of the *taeog* is obscured by the princely tradition of the *beirdd* and this cannot be tolerated in the often revolutionary socialist climate of south Wales.[16] Thus, any admiration Jones has (and it is passionately plentiful) for the historical voices of Welsh literature is

fundamentally compromised at its source. The increasingly conservative and elitist nature of the Welsh establishment disseminating the influence of Saunders Lewis can only have compounded this ideological dilemma. What emerges in Jones's admiration for, and engagement with, the *beirdd* are traces of the mutually antagonistic fault-lines that travel across the entire Welsh cultural terrain. These few works reveal how a Welsh writer like Jones *cannot* but be implicated, obstructed, and re-formed by them every time he writes.

When one places the description of the function of *Barddas* by Evan Evans (Ieuan Brydydd Hir), the great pioneering antiquarian scholar of the eighteenth-century in his *Dissertatio de Bardis,*[17] alongside Benjamin's sceptical version of history, the incongruity of the two stances becomes so apparent it is even easier to understand why modern Welsh writers using the English language, like Jones, could be presented with a considerable dilemma when they attempt to create a space in which to commune meaningfully and ethically with their poetic forbears. Evans states:

> For the bards were faithful narrators of events. Their particular duty was to celebrate in their songs the praises of princes and great men, and their famous deeds in war.[18]

> The bards took always as their themes, heroic deeds in war, freedom, hospitality, and generosity, and whatever virtue wins a man honour among his friends, but makes his enemies tremble.[19]

The *bardd* is the voice of the rigid hierarchy of earlier societies riddled with silences and empty spaces; his role is to lionise leaders and to flatter. Such a voice must be arraigned by the democratic twentieth-century writer as much as it should be hallowed. As the official voice of power it should be held responsible for its silences and its dissentions from the truth at the same time as being celebrated for its artistry. It is thus understandable that when invoking Taliesin in 'You, Taliesin', Jones is not drawn to the authentic sixth century heroic praise poetry, but to the less socially contentious 'Addwynau'. Logically enough, his romantic nature appreciates and assimilates the private praise of nature far more readily than the more overtly public praise of great leaders successful in battle, although it is difficult to escape the accusatory tone of the title. The often reluctant scepticism of Jones towards both the *beirdd* and the truth they maintained anticipates the far more strident exposé of the figure by Christopher Meredith in his novel *Griffri.*[20] Here the puppetry and the silences of the early poets that Jones critically signposts but always balances with admiration and respect are become mercenary and explored with a very ruthless post-modern irony and anti-heroism:

> For a meal and the high regard of your household I can give your ancestry back to Brutus, obscurely sing your praises, fix with my Craft your greatness, your generosity, your et cetera, and do it with words strong enough to make quiver the chin of your most cruel soldier.[21]

Jones always questions the *beirdd*, yet only implies the answer; he suggests inconsistencies but neither directly accuses nor draws absolute conclusions. And this seems symptomatic of his reluctance to interrogate either Taliesin or ap Gwilym

thoroughly or to find them in any way guilty. They cannot answer; thus, Jones merely postulates a social neglect. This reluctance to criticise his heroes directly exposes the divided loyalty he suffers between the Socialist/Christian ideology of equality that governs his sense of integrity and the more instinctual passion for beauty, grandeur and language that drives his love of poetry. This antagonism is only compounded later in life by the overwhelming demands of external politics which required a cultural cohesion that often meant skimming the surfaces of these fundamental inconsistencies to find a common ground. Such idealistic skimming can be seen to be taking place in the poem published in 1973[22] 'You, Taliesin' (*CP,* 71-3) published when Jones fuses the sentiments and style of 'Addwynau' with the material and people of the Valleys.[23] It also appears to be a guiding premise of *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* Jones's public Welsh life was dedicated to fighting and obscuring the inconsistencies that haunted the private world of his poetry and the truth is that his desire to connect with his Welsh-language heritage is riddled with ethically troublesome tensions and conflicts.

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> Why had I never heard of the staggering beauty of this material before...I could take in enough to be swept off my feet by the unfamiliar music of the *Cywyddau*, by the brilliance of their imagery, and their sharp response to the visual beauty of the world. (*DTT,* 34)

In *The Dragon has Two Tongues,* Glyn Jones dramatically recreates his return to Welsh literature, and Dafydd ap Gwilym is one of the poets he recalls reading 'in a blaze of Glory' (*DTT,* 35). Like Saul, Jones has his eyes blasted by visionary light. If at the time ap Gwilym and the other Welsh-language writers he discovered became the catalyst for a private foray into Wales's other forgotten and neglected landscape, this recollection thirty years later is arguably a more calculated public proclamation. For in the 1960s Jones knows (as he always did) that exchanging names such as ap Gwilym is a valuable currency when trying to gain purchase with the Welsh-language establishment. As much as Jones is privately drawn to ap Gwilym as creative kindred, even as a historical double (both poets found themselves at comparable cultural intersections in the history of Wales), he is uncomfortably aware of the ideology that the fourteenth century poet represents, and this is one that he both embraces and recoils from. No amount of romanticising can alter the fact that the *cywyddwyr* were as much *beirdd* as the *cynfeirdd* (i.e. the earliest Welsh poets of the seventh and subsequent centuries) and if they were unable to sustain a courtly career, they lamented the fact as much as they turned their attention to other muses and less princely patrons. Dafydd ap Gwilym may be interpreted by the liberal-minded W.J.Gruffydd as a folk hero, one who like Christ attracted great crowds.[24] He may be described as 'the earliest and most important example of the revolutionary in Welsh literature'[25] and one who 'made a gift of [poetry] to the common people'.[26] But Jones still perceives the silence of these 'common people' in the poetry itself. The beautiful gift did not write them into history and this is a cause for anxiety in a twentieth-century poet at once desperate to fulfil a relevant social role whilst being tempted like the 'Poet and Peasant' of his own poem, 'quiet within [his] secret armoury to sit / And burnish rhymes to beauty while [he writes]' (*CP,*181) .

The ghostly presence of Dafydd ap Gwilym can be discerned throughout Glyn Jones's opus, and his shadow falls as unequivocally in the final unfinished poem (*Seven Keys to Shaderdom)* as in his early work. The manifestations vary. Obvious allusions to ap Gwilym's imagery are frequent as is the experimentation with the *cwywydd* metre. Jones's own imitations and reproductions of his literary heroes' 'sharp response to the visual beauty of the world' (*DTT,* 35) are countless and a direct invocation of the *cywyddwyr* occurs in 'Henffych Dafydd'. In the introduction to the *Collected Poems*, Mercer Simpson has suggested that the early poem 'Young Brookeats in the Country' is a play on ap Gwilym's humorous romp 'Trafferth Mewn Tafarn' (Trouble at a Tavern). There are myriad translations of ap Gwilym in Jones's published work and in his papers at NLW,[27] and the poems that are in direct conversation with some of the works of ap Gwilym will be discussed below.

One specific image in the work of Dafydd ap Gwilym has spoken so strongly to Jones that it permeates his own poetic process. The image of the bird, especially the gull, can never be entirely innocent of association with Dafydd ap Gwilym's *cywydd* 'The Seagull.'[28] Jones never fully recasts the image of the bird into a sign in which 'The Seagull' is not either consciously alluded to or implicitly suggested. Jones's appropriation of the bird always casts the faint and disruptive shadow of ap Gwilym over the poem. Jones even creates a kind of poetic sequel to the original in 'Dafydd's Seagull and the West Wind,' (*CP,* 73-4) which could be seen as subversive in the way it gently mocks the earlier poet's foolishness and vocalises that which was silenced, objectified and powerless in the original poem: the seagull itself.

In Jones's work, more often than not, the gull represents something that is desired and can only be imaginatively attained. The significance of this frustrated yearning when situated in the cultural context resonates with a thirst for acceptance into Welsh-language culture, just as the borrowed image reverberates with the longing to be kin with the originator. Considering the loan aesthetically, the gull becomes the inverse symbol of the incarceration of the earth-bound voice. In 'Shadow' (*CP*,11) the voice observes a menacing 'huge indifference' of shadow cast by a bird in flight over the city roofs, which dramatises the mood of the speaker. In a much later poem ('Jakey Crosses the School Pitch' [*CP*, 99]) a similar claustrophobia finds expression through the 'Black-headed gulls, massed solid as a bus ... in the ruins of poor Jakey's head'. The seagull is an image that Jones turns to time and time again to articulate the imprisonment of man and poet in the material everyday world (even in /by the ideology of culture itself) and yet as frequently the bird is the projected vehicle of frenzied escape. The last few lines of 'Report Aber' read as follows, and can be perceived as an instance of how ap Gwilym's presence is guiding the image of the gull, in this case actively guiding the voice away from the concerns of the world:

> 'Great Dafydd's audiences were rings of giggling girls.'
> I flee, wheeling behind the bored bird, who bends his wing,
> Curves his snow-white sleeve over the wind's bundle
> And bears it skidding sideways up the promenade. (*CP*, 106)

The gull is both the messenger of emancipation and the symbol of the poet's limitation. Described within this dichotomy is the tension between allegiance to the

sovereign poetic self that seeks out such escape and to the community and culture of which Jones is both a member and representative. Left implicit is that the conflict between English and Welsh conceptions of 'the poet' can also be traced in this struggle. In 'Gull' (*CP*, 10-1) the resilience, dexterity and beauty of the bird becomes the vehicle for the observer's liberty, his freedom from the mundane. An allusion to ap Gwilym is couched in the fourteenth line ('He bears my beating heart with rosy webs') and just how the influence of the earlier poet becomes confounded in Jones's work with imaginative autonomy and sovereignty becomes apparent. When used as a symbol of imaginative flight, of freedom and of the observant yet ostracised poetic voice, the seagull remains suggestive of Jones's initial poetic response to ap Gwilym's work. In the 1931 poem 'Maelog the Eremite' an early instance of this emotional association can be observed in the following lines:

> I never lifted up my face to see
> The glory of the world within whose bounds
> I nosed and trailed. But now I see and stand
> Enchanted. The seagull sweeps in beauty down
> The wind (*CP*, 180)

The same form of enlightening 'enchantment' Jones later associated with Dafydd ap Gwilym becomes re-rehearsed by the sense of ecstatic vision that is inspired in Maelog by the beauty of the natural world and it is the image of the seagull that crystallizes this emotion. The freedom from confinement, from 'bounds', that Jones understands the Welsh-language literature to have initiated in his psyche, is the same sense of glorious liberation that is dramatically explored through the character of

'Maelog the Eremite'. The seagull thus becomes synonymous with that glorious soaring freedom and resonates with the profound effect of Dafydd ap Gwilym. The frequent recurrence of the lonely gull in particular symbolises the poet's desire to be an isolated observer and creator outside the community and the guilty pull of that community once it becomes the distant focus of eyes that cannot bear to be so ostracised and domineering. It also becomes a measure of Jones's own success and failure: in the poem 'Henffych Dafydd', discussed below, the seagull becomes sublime and coerces a willing poetic insufficiency:

> A seagull, scarcely moving
> Majestic sun mantled wings,
> Floated that air-flood's surface,
> The turn of her perfect head
> Imperious and indifferent. (*CP, 75-6*)

It is in the short story 'The Water Music' (*CS,* 196-203) that this synthesis between ap Gwilym and Jones can be seen at its most illuminating and effective. The stream of consciousness narrative imaginatively appropriates ap Gwilym's seagull as medium for the kind of ecstatic freedom I have been trying to explicate. Utterly transposed into a modernist experimentalism, the gull is made anew, carrying messages not to another, a lover, but to the self that is daring to disturb the universe:

> I am a flier with the bony arches of my wings, I am a white gull, I am two hundred gulls, I am the gull-shower of snow in sunshine.... (*CS,* 197/8)

The young narrator imagines himself as a gull as a means of coming to terms with a fear of diving that is essentially a fear of living and of flirting with the unknown. He speaks to the gull in Latin like ap Gwilym, and subsequently the allusions become more direct, as his own translation of the 'The Seagull' is referenced overtly.

> He is beautiful enough to be addressed by the wandering scholar who said, 'Lovely gull, snow-white and moon-white, immaculate sun-patch and sea glove, swift-proud fish-eater...' (*CS*, 200)

'The Water Music' is an experimental work in which the Welsh poetic tradition becomes vitalised in the mind of an innocent and is made anew in the hybrid chaos of a mind supposedly ungoverned by protocols and agitated by the excitement of the immediacy of living ('And now dare I dive?'). The quotation from 'The Seagull' is immediately answered by Dai Badger's folk ditty and reveals how concerned Jones is to explore and demonstrate how two cultures exist side by side, how they interact and dive into each other creating a language and a culture that is eccentric, vibrant and new. Dai sings, 'Take my boots off when I die, when I die' and the world of the working man collides with that of the 'wandering scholar'. The subsequent explication of Dai's father's slogan 'Let Badger be your Butcher', as 'containing more poetry and *Cynghanedd*' than Wordsworth's 'Let nature be your teacher', conflates the Welsh literature tradition with the English at the same time as locating poetry in the minds of the uneducated worker as much as it is the domain of the privileged classes. The gull, soaring as a symbol of limitless sublime imaginative expression, is juxtaposed with the everyday words of a boy, who is 'shaped like a ship's anchor' and therefore earthbound, and his father, a dealer in flesh. The location

of poetry is mystified as the banal can be as poetic as the 'high-falutin'. Dafydd ap Gwilym's seagull is forced to bear the unexpected weight of a divided and confused culture on its wide indifferent wings.

The bird/gull as emotional trigger, as code or shorthand for this initial bond, forever links the earlier poet to the language and the poetry of the later. His poem 'Gull' (*CP*, 10) is an instance in which Jones admits such an influence ('My reading of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem about a seagull inspired me' [*CP*, 141]). This poem is closely followed by 'Shadow' (*CP*, 11) and both were published in *Twentieth Century Verse* in 1937. Both poems reveal that moment of convergence between what Jones admires most about the fourteenth century *cywyddau* ('the brilliance of their imagery, and their sharp response to the beauty of the world') and his penchant for modernist experimentalism. His own language, honed by the more current trends of Imagism and Symbolism, is both homage to earlier masters and an exercise in linguistic innovation. His translation of ap Gwilym's poem 'The Seagull' also acts as vehicle for Jones's own brand of modernist imagery, and reveals just how much ap Gwilym was a tool with which Jones sharpened his own linguistic craft:

> Gracing the tide-warmth, this seagull,
> The snow-semblanced, moon-matcher,
> The sun-shard and sea-gauntlet
> Floating, the immaculate loveliness. (*CP*, 52)

If one compares this passage with another translation of the poem, Jones's own elaborations and his rhythms are forced into relief. The fact that Jones's four lines are

barely a sentence becomes increasingly stark when held against the corresponding passage by Tony Conran.

> A fine gull on the tideflow,
> All one white with moon or snow,
> Your beauty's immaculate,
> Shard like the sun, brine's gauntlet.[29]

It is not that the meaning shifts vastly between the two translations (although I'm sure this perhaps could be contested) but that different styles emerge via the choice of word and/or the position of that word. It is certain that Conran's translation would be considered the more 'faithful' in scholarly terms. How far accuracy can be considered relevant to the act of translation is dependent on how extensive a cultural casualty list is created by the process. In Jones's poem it is the hyphenated words that immediately shout themselves as 'other', and as characteristic of Jones's own work rather than the Welsh of ap Gwilym. The conjoining of words like twins, to both intensify and confound usual and recognised meanings, is utilised frequently and to great effect by Jones (and interestingly also by Dylan Thomas). The use of the stylistic device in this instance seems incongruous to the task, unless one considers that Jones has attempted to translate the staggering brilliance of ap Gwilym's imagery into English, and that this has forced him to innovate stylistically because the musicality of the Welsh language is lost in translation. To achieve a comparable music Jones has juxtaposed and converged words into rhythmic and alliterative pairs, to create a kind of imagistic shorthand, and an intensity of meaning that is not

attained, (as it is not desired) by the more literal and formally accurate translation of Conran.

To say that this kind of linguistic hyphenation especially characterises Anglo-Welsh modernism says much about the particular cultural hybridity that the English language is being mobilised to express in Wales. Jones's linguistic innovation is as provoked by the need to find a new language to accommodate two cultures as it is by the wider trend for the experimental. One could even postulate that the act of translation is a more violent, uncomfortable and uncertain process for Jones than it is for Conran.

Jones's translations were born of the cultural upheaval of the 1930s,[30] and this can be read in the apologetic manner he prefixes his poem with '*After the Welsh of Dafydd ap Gwilym*'. The manner in which Jones abstracts ap Gwilym's words and confounds his meanings compared to the ease with which Conran strings them out along lines of shorter length (three stresses per line and seven syllable couplets with alternative masculine and feminine endings characterise his version of the *cywydd*) could be symptomatic of a cultural discomfort as much as it is a conscious mode of reforming the Welsh language innovatively in English. Abstraction is an effective hiding place for uneasy truths and an excellent aide for denial at the same time as it is a conscious challenge and vehicle for change. Conran's rigorous and impressive reproduction of the metric requirements of the *cywydd* form in English belongs to a different and less uncertain Welsh cultural climate: that of the sixties when a broad front was being formed between Wales's two cultures.

The gull also enables the expression of difference that is so pertinent for the first Anglo-Welsh writers. It is through the seagull that Jones explores the sense of otherness that is the by-product of his admiration for the *beirdd.* He is necessarily other, and it is a variance that is at once enforced and also one that is desired. On the one hand Jones perceives himself to be an exile from Welsh-language culture and seeks reconciliation, and on the other he seeks the kind of chosen exile that is an escape, a freedom from the complexities and humdrum nature of everyday real life where the insistent demands of 'culture' become meaningless because it does not satisfy the restless mind that aspires beyond the material world. The bird is also a symbol which perfectly encapsulates the state of modern alienation and the subsequent isolation of the poet/individual. The bird as a symbol of exile and alienation is especially pertinent given that in the work of medieval Welsh poets, including Dafydd ap Gwilym, the bird usually symbolises the poet, preacher or musician.[31] For that bird to be so free, isolated and indifferent is certainly a comment on Jones's own un-tethered poetic state. His birds are no *llatai* (love messengers). They rather represent the freedom the poet both desires and resists. The words of Yeats's poem 'The Second Coming' seem resonant when read in parallel with Jones (and the impact of Yeats on the Welsh literary climate cannot be underestimated): 'the falcon cannot hear the falconer'. [32]

The notion of a poet exiled from community with an undefined audience is strikingly pertinent when juxtaposed with the socially defined *bardd* who is meaningless without his community and whose community is forgetful without him. An instance of resemblance between ap Gwilym and Jones that is not poetic, and that neutralises this 'otherness', can be found in their comparable predicament of

displacement. As much as Jones is exiled from Welsh culture by virtue of his language, ap Gwilym was equally exiled from his traditional position in that culture. Following the death of Llywelyn, the last prince of Wales, in 1282, he and the other *cywyddwyr* were condemned to roam by the collapse of the established role of the *gogynfeirdd* (the poets of the Welsh Princes), forced to wander from great house to great house to secure work rather than being an integral fixture of the princely household.

In 'Henffych, Dafydd' it is therefore no coincidence that the description of the intense effects of the spell cast by ap Gwilym's language is mirrored by the image of the distant untouchable 'indifferent' Gull:

> I first read your words dazzled,
> Heart's skin suddenly too small,
> Merthyr's hair shirt forgotten
> And that blade through my rib cage.
> In ecstasy, despairing,
> A seablue road through Dyfed
> I walked, the wind-currents bed.
> A sea-gull, scarcely moving
> Majestic sun-mantled wings,
> Floated that air-floods surface,
> The turn of her perfect head
> Imperious and indifferent. (*CP*, 92)

Because Dafydd ap Gwilym has had such a considerable influence on and been the catalyst for, so many of Jones's poetic innovations, obsessions and desires, he inevitably becomes the valve that releases the pressure of Jones's guilt. In the figure of Dafydd ap Gwilym it is possible to discern a kind of isolation and exile and consequent clarity of vision that is redolent with meaning for the modernist poet. The collapse of the bardic system left the Welsh poets with an uncertain role that provoked the innovation of the *cywyddau* and shifted the focus of the poetry from society to nature, from public to private praise, from laud to love, in much the same way that the collapse of the ancien European cultural régime provoked the experimentalism of modernism.[33] The lack of an audience and a purpose that ap Gwilym laments in 'The Ruin' (discussed in detail below) anticipates the lament of the 'Anglo-Welsh' poet whose voice seems equally detached and uprooted. In Dafydd ap Gwilym, the wandering *bardd*, one can discern a distant silhouette of the exile that haunted many of the first Welsh writers who used English as their poetic language. Just as ap Gwilym and his contemporaries pioneered the *cywydd* through a transformation of the more humble metric the *traethodl,*[34] in response to these seismic social and political changes, the 'Anglo-Welsh' writers of Jones's age were also experimenting with Welsh modernism and their own hybrid discourses, in search of a voice that would adequately express their new liminal situation.

The conflict between Jones the modernist exile and Jones the Welsh *bardd* is thus given a dialectic language via the kind of doubling in which projection thrives. It is the shadow of his own experiences that Jones perceives in Dafydd ap Gwilym. Indeed he asks ap Gwilym 'Which side [...] did you serve, / If either?', and it is the final option that encapsulates his own dilemma as much as it expresses a plausible

query about that of his precursor. When he asks whether ap Gwilym ignored his country's politics to follow his own artistic path, it reveals that any desire for physical and psychical freedom for Jones is as much a desire for freedom from his own history, his culture and its complexities. The post-romantic artistic desire for freedom is perhaps always that: the desire for a clean sheet of paper, a language that is untainted by unintended and proliferating meanings (something that is compounded when you must have an eye to two languages), and the space to think and create clearly and cleanly. Jones struggles to achieve the kind of indifferent ('if either') status that he postulates. Inversely, and implicitly, he also suggests that such cultural indifference was equally impossible for the earlier writer. A writer that is dislocated from his culture and community becomes meaningless, but when that culture no longer defines a space in which he can work meaningfully he becomes a cipher and his language becomes silenced. When Jones refers to Dafydd ap Gwilym as 'clown', that silence becomes all the more significant as clowns never utter a word but mime their predicament and act subversively while tragically operating both inside and outside the bounds of communal acceptance. Ap Gwilym represented as a figure of fun, one who adopts a disguise, a comical mask, becomes the butt for all jokes because what he was (a *'prifardd')* is socially and artistically obsolete. Such a reading speaks volumes about Jones and the uncomfortable position of the 'Anglo-Welsh' poet even at the end of the twentieth century.

Supplementing this approach, when Jones questions ap Gwilym in the poem 'Henffych, Dafydd' about his allegiance to the *taeogion,* he is also questioning himself and his own allegiance to 'the people' he unwittingly silences in his own work.[35] The *taeogion* of fourtennth century Wales are essentially an invisible feudal

underclass who exist upon the margins of society. They are the voiceless property of the *uchelwyr* (the ruling class) and are a people to sell or burden with rent at will, whose plight is colourfully re-imagined by Wiliam Owen Roberts in the character of Chwilen Bwm in his novel *Y Pla* (*Pestilence).*[36] For the poets of ap Gwilym's age the *taeogion* are little above the beast and certainly not a subject for poetry, as they are neither beautiful nor powerful. The struggle to maintain patronage from the *uchelwyr* and the difficulties of sustaining the role of the bardd in the light of increased English infiltration after the death of the last Prince of Wales in 1282, would have been a far greater political concern than the increasingly harsh conditions of the *taeogion.*

'Henffych, Dafydd' was published in 1973 (although it may have been written earlier) and converses with Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem 'The Ruin'.[37] In this poem lament (even arguably a form of *marwnad* [death elegy]) for the collapse of the structures that supported the *gogynfeirdd* is fused with and disguised by the less formal language of c*anu serch* (the poetry of love and nature).The metaphor of the ruin operates on multiple levels, both for Dafydd ap Gwilym in the original poem ('The Ruin') and in Jones's twentieth-century repossession ('Henffych, Dafydd'). The 'hut' is symbolic of the court that sustained the poets. The 'storm from the east' is the English invasion; 'the family's time long ended' is that of the very families who in their rule sustained the *beirdd,* the wider union of these families and courts that constituted an independent Wales and the family of the poets themselves, the *cynfeirdd* and the more recent *gogynfeirdd* who celebrated it:

Punctured, broken hut, laid low

Between moorland and meadow

Woe for us who saw your prime

A residence of pastime.[38]

Thus, when Glyn Jones chooses to interact with ap Gwilym within the confines of this particular poem, it is with full knowledge of its underlying political nature that he does so. Jones appreciates the predicament and identifies with the difficulties involved in the transformation of a poetic tradition. Dafydd ap Gwilym operated between two poetical traditions, the older formulae of the *gogynfeirdd* and his own inventions that prescribed and inspired the newer innovations of the *cywyddau*. Glyn Jones was similarly located between the Welsh-language tradition and the newer 'Anglo-Welsh' tradition. Both forged something new and innovative in their liminal spaces.

Jones's poem opens:

Rain-bombed under boughs, I crouch

By brown house bricks in ruins (*CP*, 75)

The ruin cannot but be a very loaded cultural and historical symbol for Wales.[39] Jones repossesses the ruin, but receives it decorated by a nature that has become rococo. The 'jewels on gossamer, gems', 'the glassy lace of diamonds', 'rain's jewellery' and 'lustre of fiery crystals' recreate the moments of staggering vision in which an impression becomes rapturous, and the ruin once again becomes courtly ('Sea-mists' insignia'). They also allude to ap Gwilym's own poetry,[40] to his extraordinary

language, the words, 'diamonds glowing in long rows', that have reinvigorated and redefined the ruin that is as much the voice itself as any physical form. The lines could easily be read 'I crouch...in ruins', and the emphatic location of each pair of words at the end of the lines supports the fact that it is not simply the house that is broken down. The voice has been obliterated: 'Rain-bombed under boughs'. The siege of transfiguring rain is comparable to Conran's 'storm from the east' or, in the later translation by Gwyn Thomas, 'the wild wind' that 'came from the deep of the east' to destroy the 'encampment of magic words'. In Thomas's version, the poetic voice later refers to itself as 'standing in your gale'. The effect of ap Gwilym's verse is an overwhelming aesthetic experience that moves Jones beyond mere homage towards what could be read as a profound contemplation of the 'ruin' that the Welsh language and his history is for a Welsh writer in English. Again, as in the case of 'The Poet and the Peasant', the language and images of warfare become interlinked with that of artistic creation, and this is an amalgamation which seems particularly pertinent to a nation in which a form of civil war has been played out via language in the context of both poetic creation and of political rhetoric.

In the next stanza it becomes increasingly clear how significant the lost Welsh language is for this poem, and that it is not merely physical entity that is being repossessed, but also a poetic form. The form of a *cywydd* is being appropriated (itself a ruin because of the writer's admitted ignorance and inferiority) and the rhythm and music of *cynghanedd Sain* is being approximated in the first line.[41] In addition the *canu mawl*[42] (traditional Welsh-language praise poem) is evoked in the celebratory and declamatory manner in which ap Gwilym is invoked and canonised:

You, Dafydd, *eos Dyfed,*

To me spinner, maker more

Rain-Finery's fisherman,

Netter of downpour's glitter.

The *cywydd* form is not sustained throughout Jones's long poem.[43] As much as the formula of the *canu mawl* is disrupted by the subsequent interrogation of ap Gwilym, the rhythms and rhymes of the *cywydd* are equally disturbed and inconsistent. The discomfort of the unquestioned praise is reflected by the cracks in the form. This is especially noticeable in the fifth stanza where the praise becomes ecstatic and the form seems to collapse under its weight:

'Ghostly, pale, demented moon,

You haunt Hafren's blue noon sky'

'You gather your dark shadow

over green grass towards you' (half rhyme)

Throughout 'Henffych, Dafydd' the seven syllable lines mostly fall short of the specifically stressed rhyming couplets so adeptly captured in the shorter poem, 'Swifts' (*CP,* 88). This failure of the language to adapt to the rigours of translation could be the failure of the poet but it could also be a symptom of the struggle that is referenced in the poem between two ideologically antagonistic cultures and two languages. That the two profound and shaping influences cannot be reconciled is being played out through the form and language of this poem. What results can either

be failure or innovation; a broken whole or a grotesque hybrid respectively. For mutation, an innate and uncontrollable (genetic) alteration in form, is what occurs when two entities meet and morph in the way that occurs in this poem.

The dilemma of 'sides', political and social allegiances, in stanza three interrupts the homage and potentially undermines the praise that is being offered Dafydd ap Gwilym. In fact it destabilises the language sufficiently to allow for the possibility of parody. Stanza five opens with just such a possibility, as the self effacement could be seen to be as 'umble as that of Uriah Heap, and thus altogether unreliable:

> Dafydd, I, one more croaker,
> Admirer and lamenter,
> Brought you once my clumsy songs.

This self-effacement in the shadow of the other poet is not merely an example of Jones's own humility but typical of the *barddas* formula that ap Gwilym adopts. It is vital to the nature of the *Canu Mawl* to use one's own voice (if not to disguise it completely) as a foil for aggrandizing the other. Thus, when the voice claims to be merely one 'more croaker', a familiar stance is being adopted. However, the broader significance of this humility extends beyond the formulaic for a poet writing in English in the twentieth century. Implicit in such a stance is Jones's awareness that the language he uses is a potentially inadequate inheritor of the Welsh-language tradition represented by ap Gwilym. Jones simultaneously accepts and resents his apparent inferiority and this is what makes the outcome of this negotiation with his

Welsh-language ancestor so uncertain and conflicted. Just as the last glimpse Jones permits of ap Gwilym is non-committal and evasively unresolved, so is the dilemma that haunts the homage. In fact what is achieved at the close of the poem is space for a new kind of creation in which it is possible for the Welsh heroes to be questioned. In spite of (and arguably because of) the sense of inadequacy inherent in the praise of the literary forebear, a new discourse is opened and a means to adapt the older forms for the newer politically uncertain voice is established. What Jones broaches in this poem is how to make the literary history live in another language in the modern Welsh world, rather than becoming merely monumental.

The poem that is ostensibly a form of elegy must become a living bridge between two languages, cultures and eras. To appreciate fully the extent of Glyn Jones's borrowing from Dafydd ap Gwilym one can take a closer glance at both 'Elegy for Madoc Benfras' and 'Elegy for Gruffudd Gryg'.[44] In both poems (and indeed throughout ap Gwilym's work), the celebration of poetic artistry is couched in the language of magic and precious riches. The world without Madoc Benfras is 'A sieve, magical [and] damaged',[45] Benfras himself is lamented in terms of shining lights and radiance. He has a 'copper-lustre of song' and 'rarely was he not worthy of fine gold'. Equally the death of Gruffydd Gryg is 'The taking from amongst us of a jewel, a Taliesin'. He was 'a jewel that belongs to us' and he had a 'song of golden craft work'. Even May,[46] in the poem of that name, is a 'poet's jewel' which provides 'authentic riches.' The poetic muse is repeatedly spoken of in terms of jewels and gold, and this lends literary value to the imagery of 'Henffych Dafydd' in which the same finely-wrought imagery abundantly decorates Jones's own praise of ap

Gwilym's poetic language ('encrusted brooch'; 'Brilliants as minute as mouse milk / Diamonds glowing in long rows').

It also seems vital to the model that the death of the poet is conveyed as a symbolic death of poetry itself ('the art of gracious poetry is gone'). For Glyn Jones this has a deeper resonance and he is aware that rather than providing a hyperbolic metaphor he could be writing an elegy for the English-language writers of twentieth-century Wales. Given his marginal situation, he cannot comfortably write of the demise of 'gracious poetry' without implicating himself in the death of something far more culturally significant. For Jones, it is imperative that whilst he admits the superiority of the early poet, he is still invoked as muse to forge some sense of continuity between the two temporally and ideologically distant voices. The impossible distance that the poem attempts to diminish becomes all too pertinent in the final stanza when ap Gwilym is perceived to be turning away from the 'crude fragments' offered by his modern devotee. Ap Gwilym is 'indulgent and indifferent' both to the modern poet's praise and his ideological dilemma. Ap Gwilym, like the Welsh-language pedigree he represents, is somehow located beyond the reach of Jones's voice, crystallised and separated into otherness, and Jones's voice is in some ways the Lacanian child struggling to fill an isolating maternal absence with a new but broken language.

As observed earlier in the discussion, Jones poetically reconstructs Dafydd ap Gwilym in his own image. He uses the earlier poet as a foil for his own anxieties and an instrument for his own creativity. However, this kind of appropriation had been occurring to ap Gwilym in Wales for a number of years, if not decades, before

Jones discovered his work. Welsh academics and other cultural representatives had reconstructed many different versions of his poems since their rediscovery, and by the 1930s he was a Welsh cultural icon (even commodity), functioning in much the same way that Chaucer or Shakespeare had done in the English culture. The work of ap Gwilym had been used to justify the existence of a Welsh literature equal to any other European culture, and as such used as a marketing tool. In 1914 a now obscure book by E. Lewes[47] ecstatically records how 'Dafydd ap Gwilym is a herald of the modern spirit'[48] and dedicates itself to disseminating his brilliance, as representative of the Welsh tradition, to 'the wider circle of men and women who cannot rest until they know all the best poets in the world'.[49] This appeal to the intellectually rich and restless, the obsessive collectors of literary names, is supported by the preface by Sir Edward Anwyl, at the time professor of Welsh at Aberystwyth: 'Dafydd ap Gwilym proves to be not a poet for the Welshman only, but for mankind'.[50] Dafydd ap Gwilym had been caught up in the machinations of cultural advertising. Later Saunders Lewis influentially utilised ap Gwilym and his medieval period to establish his own particular magisterial and radically conservative interpretation of the 'classic' Welsh tradition. W. J. Gruffydd, Lewis's notorious public intellectual sparring partner, also presents his own more liberal Dafydd ap Gwilym as people's hero (perhaps as a deliberate ploy to undermine Lewis).[51] But, Gruffydd does not counter the notion that 'Dafydd is therefore, the father and moulder of the Welsh Language as it is used today in Literature'.[52]) For him, the fourteenth century poet has become the signifier of how Wales is not only a valid literary player in European history and culture, but of how the 'nation' repelled overt influences from outside and maintained its own integrity and identity. Dafydd ap Gwilym becomes a key figure for the way in which the newly conscious Welsh nation perceives itself and its own history. He is

presented, not as Lewis's aristocratic figure but as popular hero who like the humble, unostentatious Christ, attracted great crowds. The liberal minded Gruffydd even explores and emphasises Dafydd ap Gwilym as a popular folk figure:

> To the older poets, the art of poetry was a mystery, but Dafydd made a gift of it to the common people. [53]

Again one can perceive the prevalent ideologies of Gruffydd's era moulding the interpretation of ap Gwilym. Gruffydd was heavily influenced by the immensely powerful idealisation of the rural *Gwerin* of Wales. The publication date of 1935 also places this work in the centre of the socialist impetus of the industrial valleys, where 'the people' is a cultural phenomenon that threatens to dwarf any homogenous theories of national identity. Grufydd's Dafydd is a folk hero (similar to Dic Penderyn) that has shifted its signification to have meaning for the English-speaking Welsh ('He is the earliest and most important example of the revolutionary in Welsh literature'[54]).

When engaging with Dafydd ap Gwilym, Jones is thus entering a field that has already been worked by weightier cultural figures than himself, and he cannot be innocent of this fact when he takes on one of the most famous and politically charged cultural signifiers in modern Welsh culture. For in so far as ap Gwilym is re-made and questioned in Jones's own image, his integrity is interrogated as the signifier of the Welsh-language literary establishment. Is Dafydd ap Gwilym a suitable hero for South Wales, for the people that Jones belongs to and whom he yearns to represent? Or is there an inevitable betrayal implicit in his praise of this poet? Can this cultural

signifier really be a fit hero for all the historically silenced voices now become so vocal? Jones questions his own personal hero at the same time as questioning a public one, and in doing so questions the possibility of 'unity' in a nation characterised by so many apparently insolvable historical ruptures and fractures. Given the multifarious ideologies that contribute to the diverse 'ideas' and interpretations of Dafydd ap Gwilym there is little wonder that Jones's own poem has to negotiate with and contribute to that same cultural complexity. Neither is it surprising that in the presence of this plurally constructed medieval *cywyddwyr,* Jones's voice is under ambush, 'rain-bombed' and in ruins.

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[1] Tony Conran, 'Anglo-Welsh Poetry Today', *Poetry Wales,* Vol.4 no. 3 (Spring 1969) 13.
[2] See J. Gwenogvryn Evans, 'Addwynau', *The Poems of Taliesin* (Tremblan, Llanhedrog, N.Wales: 1915) 72-5. 'The editorial scholarship of Sir Ifor Williams, however, has shown that twelve of the poems contained in the manuscript can be set apart from the rest and treated as genuine early material'. (A.O.H. Jarman, 'Taliesin', *A Guide to Welsh Literature Vol.*1 (Cardiff: UWP, 1992) 55. The 'Addwynau' is not one of the twelve 'historical' poems that Sir Ifor Williams isolates as 'genuine', and Jones would have been aware of this fact when he invokes Taliesin in his 1973 poem 'You, Taliesin'. See Sir Ifor Williams, 'Lecture III', *Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944) 49-70 and *The Poems of Taliesin* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1975).
[3] An interesting tangent would be to examine just how far Jones's admiration for the imagery of the fourteenth century poet was also directed by the influence of the twentieth century imagists. How these two creative authorities collided and con-mingled could further illuminate Jones's singular reclamation of the Welsh tradition. Imagist Ezra Pound, whom Jones so admires and shares a love of language and symbol with, also, amongst other ancient periods, meticulously researched and recast troubadour and medieval Italian poems to forge his Modernist voice.
[4] M. Wynn Thomas, *Corresponding Cultures* (Cardiff: UWP, 1999).
[5] Jason Walford Davies, 'Thick Ambush of Shadows: Allusions to Welsh Literature in the work of R.S.Thomas' , in *Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Essays,* 1 (1995), 75-127.
[6] Emyr Humphreys, *The Taliesin Tradition: A Quest for the Welsh Identity* (Bridgend: Seren, 1990).
[7] Iolo Morganwg was the great antiquarian and counterfeiter of Welsh literary history, who was inspired by the contemporary fashions to record and re-create the ancient writers of Wales in the eighteenth century.
[8] K. Trumpener, *Bardic Nationalism: The Romantic Novel and the British Empire* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1997).
[9] T.S.Eliot, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', *Selected Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1951). See pages 19-20 for an example of this desire to displace the personality of the author ('the poet has not a personality to express but a particular medium'). He subsequently takes on Wordsworth directly when he writes 'We must believe that emotion recollected in tranquillity is an inexact formula...poetry is not a turning loose of emotion, but an escape from emotion...' (21).
[10] "Saunders Lewis sought to explain the European dimension of what he called 'the Welsh Aesthetic'". See T. Robin Chapman, 'Poetry between the Wars', *A Guide to Welsh Literature* ed. Dafydd Johnston (Cardiff: UWP, 1998) 50-88, 51. Chapman refers to the published debates between W.J.Gruffydd and Lewis as each sought to advertise their own antagonistic version of the Welsh canon.
[11] Op. cit. 14.
[12] Tony Conran trans., 'Trouble at a Tavern', *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003) 174-6. See also Mercer Simpson's introduction (*CP, xxii*) for the observation that the two poems are in dialogue.

[13] T. Gwynn Jones, 'Argoed', *The Bloodaxe Book of Modern Welsh Poetry* trans. Tony Conran (Northumberland: Bloodaxe Books, 2003) 31-40.
[14] Louise Macneice, 'Snow', *Collected Poems* (London: Faber, 1979) 30.
[15] Walter Benjamin and Hannah Arendt ed., 'Theses on the Philosophy of History', *Illuminations,* trans. Harry Zohn (London: Cape, 1970) 245-255, 248.
[16] How strongly Jones felt about the politics of his valley home and the voice of the workers is illustrated by his early and frustrated desire to write a body of 'people's poetry'. The failure to launch this dream of youthful idealism fuelled his longest short story 'I was Born in the Ystrad Valley' and provided the impetus for his obsessive and lengthy translation of the *Hen Benillion,* both of which will be considered more profoundly in a later chapter. In 1981, Jones again reiterates this lifelong concern in an interview with Robert Minhinnick for the *New Welsh Review.*

> I think of Iolo Goch's labourer – poor chap, he or his granddad would have been ploughing just the same in 1283 as in 1281. *Taeogion* lived in our land also, not only princes. Do we ever remember them?

('Robert Minhinnick, 'Interview' Glyn Jones's, *The New Welsh Review,* No. 1 [Summer, 1981] 6 – 11, 11).
[17] Charlotte Johnston intro and trans., 'Evan Evans: Dissertatio de Bardis', *The National Library of Wales Journal,* XXII/1 (1981) 60-91.
[18] Ibid. 83.
[19] Ibid. 85.
[20] Christopher Meredith, *Griffri* (Bridgend: Seren 1991).
[21] Ibid. 9.
[22] Glyn Jones, 'You, Taliesin', *The Anglo-Welsh Review,* Vol. 22, no.50 (Autumn 1973) 88.
[23] See J. Gwenogvryn Evans, 'Addwynau', *The Poems of Taliesin* (Tremblan, Llanbedrog, N.Wales: 1915) 72-5. This is the translation of 'Addwynau' that Jones was specifically in dialogue with when he wrote 'You, Taliesin'.
[24] W.J. Gruffydd, *Dafydd ap Gwilym* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1935).
[25]Ibid. 81.
[26]Ibid. 49.
[27] See a file entitled 'Welsh Grammar', Box 26 B1/10, Glyn Jones Papers, National Library of Wales, Aberystwyth in which there are translations of Dafydd ap Gwilym poems and additional notes on others dated 27-2-31. Poems include, 'Y lleian', 'Y Forfudd', 'Y Daran', 'Y Gwallt Merch' and 'Y Wylan'. Here too can be found the poem 'The girls of Llanbadarn', published for the first time in the 'Appendix II: Later unpublished poems', *The Collected Poems of Glyn Jones,* 225. In his published versions Jones is tentative about the accuracy of his own translations and always subtitles them *'after the Welsh of Dafydd ap Gwilym'* revealing his cultural sensitivity and sense of what he has sacrificed in the process of translation.
[28] See Glyn Jones *CP,* 52. For other translations of Dafydd ap Gwilym's poem, see versions by Gwyn Thomas, 'The Gull', *Dafydd ap Gwilym: His Poems* (Cardiff: UWP, 2001) 229 and Tony Conran, 'The Seagull', *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003) 172.
[29]Tony Conran, *Welsh Verse* (Wales: Seren, 1967, [2003]) 172.
[30] He was taught by Saunders Lewis so his strict interpretation of the Welsh-language tradition, and particularly the pivotal position Dafydd ap Gwilym held in it, must have infiltrated Jones's psyche and intensified his already firm sense of cultural guilt.
[31] Huw Edwards writes that 'a common motif is that of birds as poets or musicians who praise God with their joyful singing'. *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Influences and Analogues* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, 1996) 71-2. Helen Fulton writes that 'birds are preachers or musicians'. *Dafydd ap Gwilym and the European Context* (Cardiff: UWP, 1989) 160-1.
[32] W.B.Yeats, *The Poems,* ed. Daniel Albright (London: Everyman, 1995) 235-8. The significance of birds for the Irish and the Welsh literary traditions is perhaps what creates such echoes as this. Such links cannot so easily be made with the modern English tradition, where such medieval motifs remain in the middle ages, obscured by the interventions of centuries. Thus, the motif of the bird translated into the Anglo-Welsh poetry of Jones so effectively and recurrently, can be seen as characteristic of the distinctly Modern reclamation of the Middle Ages. It is one that rewrites ancient Welsh verse for a language suited to the modern exile of the 'Anglo-Welsh' individual. I also refer any reader seeking

substantiation for the particular significance that birds have within Welsh literature to Dewi Roberts's charming and meticulously researched anthology *Birdsong* (Bridgend: Seren, 2002).

[33] For, like Glyn Jones, Dafydd ap Gwilym was also writing at a time of great cultural and political upheaval. The conquest of Llywelyn ap Gruffydd's principality by Edward I transformed Welsh society and the physical landscape, as the erection of the many castles that have become so symbolic of oppression within the literature and culture of Wales displaced the princedoms. Patronage could not be relied upon, and exiled the *bardd* in a manner which is broadly comparable to the sense of displacement which characterises modernist literature. This political insecurity and uncertainty shadows that of the emerging 'Anglo-Welsh' movement in which Glyn Jones was such an active operative. For an interesting and seminal study of the extent to which Dafydd ap Gwilym was informed by this incoming European Culture see Helen Fulton, *Dafydd ap Gwilym and the European Context* (Cardiff: UWP, 1989).

[34] Huw Edwards, *Dafydd ap Gwilym: Influences and Analogues* (Oxford: New York: Clarendon Press, 1996).

[35] The poems 'Merthyr' and 'Cwmcelyn' are also instances of this guilty struggle that preoccupies Jones and intensifies throughout his career.

[36] Wiliam and Elizabeth Owen Roberts, *Pestilence* (Bridgend: Seren, 1991).

[37] See Tony Conran, trans., 'The Ruin', *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003) 180-1.

[38] Tony Conran, trans., 'The Ruin', *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: Seren, 2003) 180-1, 180.

[39] In the introduction to his translations of Waldo Williams's poetry, Tony Conran notes, 'Houses are important in Welsh poetry, from Llywarch Hen onwards. Houses, says Saunders Lewis, are where you keep things.' Tony Conran, Trans., *The Peacemakers: Waldo Williams* (Llandysul: Gomer, 1997) 33. He then continues to quote his translation of *Yr Heniaith* (The Old Language) which refers to raising 'old indestructible stones'. The concept of ruins and broken stones is interesting when placed in relief with this discussion of 'Henffych, Dafydd' ('I crouch / by brown housebricks in ruins'), and of course in the context of how 'Anglo-Welsh' literature may itself contribute to the 'ruin' of Wales. This is especially pertinent, when it is considered that Jones himself attempted a translation of Waldo Williams's poem (Unpublished) in his papers at the NLW. In fact there is a case for examining the tri-fold dialogue that seems strikingly apparent between, 'The Ruin', '*Yr Heniaith*', and 'Henffych, Dafydd'. The potential for a comparative analysis of the works of Glyn Jones and Waldo Williams is considerable.

[40] Gwyn Thomas's translation (*Dafydd ap Gwilym: His Poems* [Cardiff: UWP, 1991] 282-3) includes the following lines, uttered in conversation between the ruin and the poet, which profoundly suggest Jones's preoccupation with the cornucopia of riches and the magical transformation of vision:

'I moan (encampment [once] of magic words)' (line 23).
'The world is ever awesome magic' (line 31).

[41] Cynghanedd sain:

You Dafydd / Eos dyfed
df / df

[42] Poems by ap Gwilym, subsequently translated by Gwyn Thomas, praising *Madoc Benfras* and *Gruffudd Gryg* (Gwyn Thomas trans. 'Elegy for Madoc Benfras', 'Elegy for Gruffudd Gryg', *Dafydd ap Gwilym: His Poems* (Cardiff: UWP, 2001) 40-1, 42-3) resonate within both the tone, and the language of *Henffych Dafydd.* This later scholarship merely emphasises how able, if not accurate, Jones really was at interpreting, even intuiting, Welsh poetry. His lack of accuracy in translation is arguably the product of the ongoing dialogue he has with the Welsh language that intervenes in the strict transposition of meaning from one language to another.

[43] Glyn Jones's shorter contemporary poem 'Swifts' (*CP*, 77) is the truest rendition of a *Cywydd.* Despite this, the failure of 'Swifts' to signpost the difficulties inherent in appropriating the form from another language and another culture, for the purposes of this thesis, renders it little more than an interesting poetic exercise.

[44] Gwyn Thomas, trans., 'Elegy for Madoc Benfras', 'Elegy for Gruffudd Gryg', *Dafydd ap Gwilym: His Poems* (Cardiff: UWP, 2001) 40-1, 42-3.

[45] Ibid. 'Elegy for Madoc Benfras', 40-4.1.

[46] Ibid. 'May', 51-52.

[47] E. Lewes, *Life and Poems of Dafydd ap Gwilym,* (London: David Nutt, 1914).

[48] Ibid. xvi.

[49] Ibid. xvi.

[50] Ibid. xii.

[51] W.J. Gruffydd, *Dafydd ap Gwilym* (Caerdydd: Gwasg Prifysgol Cymru, 1935).

[52] Ibid. 49.
[53] Ibid. 49.
[54] Ibid. 81.

Chapter Four

Con(figuring) the Nation in *Seven Keys to Shaderdom:* Excavating the mask of Llywarch Hen

As an experienced writer and an older man, Jones confronts the faults that destabilise his own work, and recognises that these conflicts and inconsistencies are microcosms of the antagonisms that his divided nation had implicitly written upon his own psyche. He then finally confronts the fact that he is himself a mere shadow of his own impossibly dualistic come pluralistic culture. *Seven Keys to Shaderdom* is this realisation given a form partly deriving from the figure of Llywarch Hen. Re-inhabiting ruins seems to be a common theme for Jones, especially when his mind bends towards his nation and his literary ancestors. Just as he is himself a shadow of a larger Welsh crisis, he seeks a double in one who is integral to his nation's historical identity. Llywarch Hen (a legendary figure of the early middle ages), along with Taliesin (the seventh century poet of the heroic tradition) and Dafydd ap Gwilym (the groundbreaking fourteenth century Welsh 'troubadour'), is one of the canonical fathers of Welsh literature, and the significance of this choice of voice cannot escape unscrutinised.

In the 1950s Glyn Jones published a limited edition little-known radio poem that is not included in any of his other printed works. It was entitled *The Saga of Llywarch the Old: A Reconstruction by Glyn Jones with Verse Interludes*, and was guided by the contemporary scholarship of Sir Ifor Williams, whose seminal interpretation of the Saga of Llywarch Hen can also be found in the introduction of

this rare edition.[1] Jones set himself the task of filling ('shading') in the spaces between the existent verses with prose, to recreate the saga as it may once have been told and retold by the storytellers. Jones plays *cyfarwydd* to this tale of duty, heroism and loss that is riddled with narrative holes and still open to academic revision. Of course post-modernists now more comfortable with fragments, repudiate attempts at constructing 'historic' narratives for the precise reason that these impose a structure which, however well informed, is historically false and potentially misleading.[2] However, for the study of Jones and his re-imagining of seminal Welsh figures and texts, his 'reconstruction' of the saga in modern narrative form is an invaluable source that clearly reveals more of him than it ever could of the Llywarch Hen saga, let alone the fictive historical figure himself, who is as difficult to locate as Taliesin. It is strangely fitting that from one great poetic sequence riddled with silences and absences, another should emerge over 1000 years later equally incomplete, as suggestive and as inspiring as the other. Jones's own final poetic 'saga', *Seven Keys to Shaderdom,* is a poem that has also been reassembled editorially from fragments into a schematic whole, and the scattered structure of both poems, so disparate in their detail, are hopelessly opposed to the conception of an imaginative whole. It is significant that in this particular, they both reflect the analogous condition of Wales at the time of their creation.

Seven Keys to Shaderdom (*CP,* 111-131) sees Jones utilising the figure of the old and impotent man and again taking literary possession of the earlier text and its uncertain historical location and 'national' fragmentation to explore modern Wales. His use of memory, lament, and the subtle iconography of the king/prince (specifically Llywarch Hen) enables the kind of tragic-comic quasi-dramatic

sequence that Samuel Beckett is better known for (notably the plays *Endgame* and *Waiting for Godot)*. It confuses the role of the artist with that of the clown in a treatment of Wales that lies somewhere between the operatic and vaudeville. If any poem symbolises the struggle of the first 'Anglo-Welsh' writers to come to terms with their 'Wales' and the fight to find a language, a tone, a safe 'ruin' from which to observe, and act out a possible role, then it is this sequence. Llywarch Hen is the perfect mask to wear, the ideal role to play when attempting and failing to assimilate the memories and experiences of a century of struggle into a coherent whole. Llywarch Hen was supposed Prince in his own kingdom of loss and this tragedy breathes life into Jones's text. The fact that the attic home of Shader Twm is forcibly and excessively hyphenated to serve so many different and conflicting purposes ('Studio-cum-living room-cum-kitchen-cum-bed-room') seems to evoke exactly the sense of a 'chaotically littered' Wales (is there also an oblique reference to the politicisation of the hyphen in twentieth century Wales?). However, that such an apparently vast territory ('lofty, large, spacious even') is yet, forced to the very edges of itself is bitterly meaningful for Wales. In this room, space vies inexplicably with its obverse evoking a sense of paradoxical claustrophobia and vacuum that is the peculiar inheritance of the first Anglo Welsh writers.

That this is a very public and also intrinsically private lament makes the extensive amount of stage direction significant, especially, considering that the drama is silent, mostly played out in the mind and language by Twm. It is a private production, a play that arguably has no direct speech, for as much as the poetic fragments can be spoken aloud they could also be written or thought. There is no clear indication that the stanzas are speeches. Such dramatic architecture seems

excessive for the private ruminations of an individual, unless the process through which his memories are revisited, and retained, is significant for, and representative of, the comparable process of national/cultural memory. It seems highly likely that the italicised 'stage directions' are shadows of the narrative that Jones inserted between the poetry in the *The Saga of Llywarch the Old*, functioning as intervening stanzas, and supplementing the existent poetic fragments. Jones is playing *Cyfarwydd* to his nation in the late twentieth century as the earlier storytellers did 1000 years earlier in telling and retelling the story of *Llywarch Hen.*

The stage directions introduce '*Tom, Tom ap Twm, Shader Tom, Tom Didymus'*. Jones's Llywarch Hen is prefixed by the phrase (*'Let us call him')* as though this series of names somehow abbreviates his extensive and uncertain identity. It morphs from English to Welsh to English into the more fixed and less contested nomenclature of Ancient and Classical Greek (*'Didymus'*, the twin) and in the process reveals a figure complicated and made plural by the history he is about to voice. The constancy of the literal and historical stalwart, Llwyarch Hen, becomes the fixed point from which this later imitative double proliferates. The points of contact between the two lonely and haunted figures ensure that *'Tom ap Twm'* (already made double in the languages of Wales) is of his culture (of Llwyarch's shadow) and not floating incoherently and grotesquely meaningless in his attic. Written on his wall (in the style of the *Hen Benillion*) are the following four folksy lines.

My name is Twm Pryce
My feet are like ice
In this bloody attic,

And that's emphatic (*CP*, 112)

The connotations that having feet like ice and living in the attic (high above the ground) have for cultural and national foundations require only a brief explication. Frozen feet are suggestive of dormant roots and an unknown or uncertain place in history, and this is as culturally significant as the fact that 'cold' acts as short hand for all the manifestations of poverty that Jones evokes in this haunting construction of Twm's world. Attics are also the places where ghosts and abandoned memories reside in dusty fragments and this only compounds the profound arteries of implication disguised in this Prologue. What is written and drawn on the attic wall reiterates that for Jones the 'I' cannot be imagined without incriminating the fault lines of a collective cultural DNA. One is drawn to Bhabha for explication as he writes of the 'scraps, patches, and rags of daily life' that 'must be repeatedly turned into the signs of a coherent national culture'.[3] For Jones, this once again involves the adoption of the tree, a governing image that is mobilised to contain the chaotic mix of history and identity that must be mastered for a nation space to be represented:

> Many words and drawings superimposed one upon
> the other in the manner of primitive cave paintings;
> Sketches of trees, branches, leaves, fruit, in charcoal
> Crayon, pencil; short poems hung on a vast Tree of Knowledge (*CP*, 83)

This childish ('crayon and pencil') collage of images and signs is poignantly suggestive of prehistoric man exploring and attempting to represent his environment with the materials closest to hand. That in the late twentieth century a man should be

scratching for meaning on the nearest available surface says much about the true sophistication of culture, our ability to understand our place in it, and to imagine it in any reasoned process. This action also more specifically alludes to the paradox that is modern Wales: both utterly ancient and totally recent. Shader Twm, in the twentieth century, *can* meaningfully become the twin of Llywarch Hen and more pertinently it *can* be vital to his existence that he does so. As this ridiculous character reclines to return to 'his daily questionings of his face and form ... his surroundings, his cyclothymia and the vicissitudes of his long hapless life' (*CP,* 113) it is Llwyarch Hen who is the unobtrusive crutch that supports his ponderings, and whose shape gives an firm outline for Shader and his shading to inhabit. Of course the obverse side to this strange twinning is the fact that as much as Llywarch Hen signifies Twm, Twm also begins to infect the way Llywarch Hen is perceived, and that this ancestor could also be a figure of parody becomes implicit in the homage.

The signs that appear superficial are in fact integral to the structure of this poem. Subtly entrenched allusions to the earlier Heroic figure act as conduit for the 'delusive realism' of the later pathetic hero. The opposing language of Llywarch Hen's grandiose glory and unrelenting despair lends itself to the extremes of 'Cyclothymia', where mood exists only in the two opposing dramatic forms of euphoria and depression. The fact that Shader Twm is unable to locate a steady mood, a balance between the two emotional extremes, translates interestingly into the terms of Welsh Culture, which in the twentieth-century oscillates precariously in the imaginative mind of its writers between a voracious vitality and imminent extinction. The fact that there is no safe place for a culture, which is simultaneously alive *and*

dying, renders the allusions to Llywarch Hen and his historical predicament particularly potent. The Prologue closes:

> In the interest of increased comfort he removes his hat
> from his head to his chest (*CP*, 113)

The idea that something living can find 'comfort' in the ritualised position of the dead confounds the appearance of reality, aptly captures the frustrating paradox that plagues all ideas of Wales in the last century, and irrevocably locates Twm as a channel for it.

The direct allusions to Llywarch Hen become sparser beyond the Prologue; however, Twm's characterisation is here sufficiently introduced and sustained, until his words are, for want of any others, forced into collision with those of Llywarch Hen in the final section. In the Prologue, the familiar ancient iconography of Llywarch Hen the Warrior Prince is made strange and un-homely in Twm's attic. Twm is attired in the clothes and demeanour of his character. He is 'supported by his snake-tongued thumbstick' (*CP*, 112) reminiscent of Llywarch's 'wooden crook',[4] he 'limps an evening circuit of his room' as a prince or Lord would survey his kingdom. He even has a 'useless throne of orange boxes' (*CP*, 111) and wears 'grey helmet-like headgear' (*CP*, 112). These costumes and actions are obsolete, delusional and quite pathetic when transposed with bathos into Twm's ridiculously spartan and cavernous kingdom, exemplifying the subsequent lines in the poem, that 'inheritance can never be inherited / as once it was inherited'. Instead, it is 'endlessly reborn in different guise / from generation to generation' (*CP*, 125). Jones offers just some of these

'guises' here. The isolation of Llywarch Hen, the leader with neither successor nor land, is reflected in the existential poverty of Twm: the artist with neither a significant legacy nor a coherent nor comforting history. Just as Llywarch Hen suffered at the memory of his actions, Twm's own memory channels his torment of failure, and living is an onslaught of images that can be assimilated neither happily nor efficiently. Llywarch Hen's legacy is both national and personal and the latter only surfaces fully when Twm inhabits the rhetoric of his double in the final section (VII) which will be discussed later in the chapter.

Shader Twm's attic has one window with a 'coating of atmospheric filth', and he possesses one 'solitary eye' (*CP*, 112). His vision is impossibly inhibited and incomplete, and metaphorically loaded when the two languages, two cultures of Wales are considered. Two eyes could see the entirety of a nation, one eye can only see half. Visualisation of a whole is impossible. Nowhere is it so pronounced that Jones was caught early within a dilemma, a cultural and artistic double-bind, and in a sense compelled and condemned to play out the sequence of his complexity for the rest of his working life, than in this, the unfinished lament of his last years. The dichotomies and contradictions of his nation and the uncertainty of his own place in it, that he fought to master and make amends for throughout his career, re-emerge in all their impossible and irrevocable insolvability. It is here in this futility that the absurdity of Twm is truly located. That a life's striving for an ideal has as yet failed to answer the first broken inconsistencies of reality, and been unable to shift the cycles of the psyche out of their familiar pattern is fiercely and bitterly expounded. The following words belong to Michael Ondaatje and express perfectly the impasse that Jones meets throughout his career-

> It's like a villanelle, this inclination of going back to events in our past, the way the villanelle's form refuses to move forward in linear development, circling instead at those familiar moments of emotion. Only the rereading counts, Nabokov said. … we live permanently in the recurrence of our own stories, whatever story we tell.[5]

Jones himself conveys a comparable sentiment when he writes

> Art intervened, but in Paris, Rome, some one
>
> Thing I heard recurrent through all my painter's
>
> Schemes, remote at times, thunders of the moon,
>
> Or else the tapping, tapping, tapping in my head –
>
> Something there frantic to get out (*CP*, 119-20)

Jones the poet was forged in the antagonistic Wales of the 1930s and the mark of this traumatic divided time is forever scorched into his work causing him to circle that 'familiar moment of emotion' and retell the same story. The 'familiar moment' of linguistic conflict and imagined cultural and social partition that characterised the Wales of his artistic youth, is the shadow that haunts his life's work. The perceived dynamics of the prolonged verbal combat between the two languages and literatures of Wales recurs in many varying forms, taking many various guises, but always follows the same frustrated and unresolved sequence: one which strands the individual – like Jones and Shader Twm – undefined and in the margins. They are doomed to be strange exiles in and from their own nation.

The sensation of being an outsider, of being left behind or stranded in time and a place haunted by a gloriously defeated past, not only references the age and failure of Twm but also explains the particular and insistent resonance that the predicament of Llywarch Hen has for Jones. In his own reconstructive prose, Jones imagined Llywarch Hen as a lonely exile when he first returned to Wales from the old North (i.e. the modern north of England and the lowlands of Scotland) after Prince Urien's death. He is conceived wandering without home when he is recognised and reinstated by a local lord. This reverberates with Twm's own state of disillusioned and dispossessed solitude. Jones also writes that on Llywarch Hen's return to Pennawg, the seat of Urien's court in ancient Powys (North-East Wales), he was confronted with 'a wilderness, with a ruin in the midst of it'.[6] Disinherited, at the end of Jones's reconstruction, Llywarch Hen is 'forced into hiding ... He wandered about from court to court and from stronghold to stronghold'.[7] A comparable condition can be read in Twm's predicament (and of course the disinheritance of the 'Anglo-Welsh' by their Welsh language 'Fathers'). Despite the fact that such spiritual dispossession is proffered by many as the legacy of humanity in the Godless twentieth century (Beckett's *Endgame*[8]), there is a strong possibility that in this work existentialism has been appropriated to give a language to the recurrent sense of literal dispossession that is the particular 'villanelle' of the first generation of marginalised 'Anglo-Welsh', now advancing into old age. This would explain the apparent tardiness of style and mood conveyed in this piece of work. Jones moulds and transforms the previously prevalent philosophy to express something specific to his own and the Welsh condition.

In his reconstruction, Jones illustrates the *hiraeth,* the yearning homesickness for a home that is lost and idealised, that he surmises would have been Llywarch Hen's reaction to the loss of Urien.

> In the dark cave they remembered their defeat and their slain prince, and grief and longing came upon them when they thought of Rheged, and the land where once they had drunk sweet mead'.[9]

It is this same sense of yearning that Shader Twm is tormented by in the first section of the poem. For Llywarch Hen that home is a physical place (Rheged or the court at Powys) and the memories are unelaborated ('where they once drank sweet mead'). Whilst for Twm it is rather an abstract state of mind that is recalled and repossessed as he becomes his own ghost, shadowing and re-imaging his personal life and history as it was and as it could have been. Llywarch Hen's moral remorse for his specific actions is substituted in Jones's poem for a more complex excursion into the dynamics of a mind grappling with age and 'wasted youth'. Guilt emanating from a severe sense of failure is matched by the burden of action for Llywarch Hen. Twm's anguish resides in the memories of non-action and a state of ineffective being. At once nostalgic and then embittered, longing and then violent, aching and then insane, the one constant in this poem is reality ferociously countering romanticism. In fact it is not only youth that lies bleeding in the spaces between the words but idealism itself (even the sublime) that is being castigated and yet still agonisingly lamented. That aspect of humanity which makes us hope and dream and aspire, and drives us repeatedly onto the rocks where we see the reflections of ourselves singing songs we can only half fathom:

And the anguished inmate, wild-eyed exile,
Rouses, croaking, 'Jesus Christ, the same
Yesterday, today, and for ever', - where
Is her lovely striding, her high laugh, her molten
Leopard-leap of wit and silken winds lifting
Her red gold hair ... (*CP*, 114)

To have faith and hope in old age is to be in the company of the mad and the deluded.

Yearning for the past, homesickness for a life both lived and unlived, now irrevocably lost except to the language that constructs it, overpowers the arteries of this poem like a surge of constricted blood, as much as regret and failure overwhelms them:

Where is Tangwen now, where Nest, where is Gwenllian
The apple blossom and the summer's glow?
Where are the 'gentle gold-torqued maidens
of this island'? Where is Elen of the Hosts? (*CP*, 113)

Iconic historical and mythical heroines of Wales are intermeshed with the specific memories and the laments of Twm. Public and private histories become lenses to magnify and distort each other. Nest, Gwenllian, Elen, Rhiannon, Morfudd cede their position for 'Mabli of the mental hospitals'. "Where" are they? As much as this question is posed to express a personal grief, it is a query for a nation that has failed

to live up to its stories and histories, and the enquiry of a man who seeks these women as though their ideal perfection were a form of redemption for the masculine voice who is all at sea in a world that no longer makes sense. What this says about the nation and its gender needs little explication.

*

'I will suffer hardship before I will yield ground'.

'There will be a broken, shattered shield before I retreat'.[10]

These words belong to Gwen as he leaves his father, Llywarch Hen, to stand on *Rhyd Forlas.* When Jones selects the figure of Llywarch Hen to reflect Shader Twm and thus implicates his saga in the refraction of the Welsh nation, the futile stoicism and determined heroism of Gwen as he fulfils the duties expected by his father becomes the sinister measure against which the defence of the Welsh language as primary definition of 'Welsh identity' at any cost, is placed. In Llywarch Hen, Jones knowingly takes an iconic Welsh cultural figure, on whose shoulders (along with Taliesin and Dafydd ap Gwilym) a nation has been laid, and not only makes him ridiculous, but uses his character to interrogate all that he has come to represent. Jones cannot be unaware of how the scholar A.O.H Jarman postulates that the Llywarch Hen saga is a potentially subversive questioning of the prevailing heroic code,[11] and he mobilises this revisionism to pose his own questions to the ideologies that dominated late twentieth century Wales. Llywarch Hen laments his old age and his sons, but ostensibly it is the ideology that he lived his life by that is his true regret. Living the savage heroic code to its letter has sacrificed his line, his comfort, and

exposed such bitterness that he can find little comfort in its strictures and severities now he has passed the age of shield bearing. Such staunch defence of his borders has achieved only loss.

How does this translate into twentieth-century Wales with its similar preoccupations with borders, territories and the burden of loss? The principles and beliefs that have dogged a century of warfare where shields and spears have been words cast across linguistic borders: are they to be compared with the physical defence of land? Can the deaths be comparable? The life of men equated with the life of words? When what is at stake is the same, then the comparison will stand as stoically as Gwen, and the stake remains what it always has been: territory or language, what is at stake is an unconquered Wales. What was a *literal* invasion and defence in the earlier centuries has become more of a *literary* assault and defence. However, the disillusion and the sense of failure is shared by Llywarch Hen and his twentieth-century counterpart. Jones, the English speaker and writer, feels that a less obvious border has been left inadequately defended, exchanged for the sake of the more valuable areas. He is a child of Binary Wales, and remains so to the last. It is his obsessively recurrent conviction that like the Gwen of his own reconstruction, he has been sold at the ford for an idea of 'Wales' he is not convinced by, but adheres to out of a sense of Duty. Duty to his history, his 'father', and to the guilt of unconscious betrayal that never seems to release its grip on his uneasy 'anglicized' thoughts.

The Gwen of Glyn Jones's reconstruction is an interesting character. He is the figure that most creative liberties are taken with, and he is a 'conscientious objector', if you like, to his father's heroism, and grandiose stories of valour and death. He

chooses the existence of a learned hermit, until his father calls him back to serve his land, which he does with a dignity that exposes exactly the foolish fate that has been prepared for him. Dying for the defence of one's land is *foolish* when that death is ostensibly a 'glorious' suicide, but it is a responsibility that Gwen is willing to take and fulfil. Jones himself took a similarly courageous and necessary step as he fought doggedly for the English-language branch of the original Welsh-language *Academi* (The National Academy of Welsh Writers) throughout the 1960s. The product of this battleground was *The Dragon has Two Tongues* (1968) which reveals a similar combination of duty, to the increasingly pressing ideals of the Welsh-language establishment, and the more peaceably held conviction that such dividing strictures are foolish and self-defeating. He always situates himself staunchly at the 'ford' when it comes to defending the future of Wales as required by the voices of his contemporary Welsh-language 'fathers', and yet his reservations and resentments towards his obligation are also implicit in the way he does not ultimately yield to the code. The question we are left with as we begin to consider *Seven Keys to Shaderdom* and its significance for ideas of the twentieth-century Welsh nation, is whether Jones ever did understand the urgencies of Welsh Wales despite his love and commitment to the Welsh language and its heritage. As he can criticise (even lampoon) the orthodoxy of the Welsh-language literary nationalists so subtly yet stridently in his work, it may be possible to conclude that such urgencies are not present in his work.

To allude, and Jones offers more than a simple reference, to Llywarch Hen (as with ap Gwilym and Taliesin) inevitably implicates the modern re-construction of the Welsh 'Nation' and this becomes strikingly apparent as the poem evolves. This is a poem concerned primarily with the ideas of Wales that have battled for space in

twentieth-century Wales and the casualties that have ensued. Not least of all the casualties are the artist and poet, whose vision, since the seventh-century oral composition of Llywarch Hen, is so integral to the representation of the coherent idea of 'nation', and 'people'. It is therefore no accident that vision, literal and metaphoric is a substantial trope in the poem. Shader's solitary eye becomes vital to, and cause of his own confused view of his country and his life.

Sight and coherence are not always synonymous and Shader's first view of the television is a symbol of how ideas of culture and definitions of the nation have evolved beyond the shaping eyes of the traditional creators. Nation and identity cannot be contained by order, just as all the images of the screen cannot be computed by the individual eye. Shader Twm's dilemma is that of Taliesin in Watkins's earlier poem:

> Earth's shadow hung. Taliesin said: 'The penumbra of history is terrible.
> Life changes, breaks, scatters. There is no sheet anchor.[12]

The television exposes a world in which the sense of a single mind becomes inadequate to the task of retaining culture. It challenges the capacity of memory to contain the painful extent of experience and this post-modern predicament and the symptomatic anxiety reveals the precarious position of the artist in this new world: the new medium has rendered the artist and poet as bearer of culture and history, stronghold of memory, obsolete. The brutal and anguished poetry that follows is strictly and yet ineffectively structured by the passing of the seasons, of time, in a style that is reminiscent of the first Welsh poet, Taliesin. The confluence of two

poets, Taliesin and Jones, for whom nature is respectively a satisfactory temporal measure of experience and for the other a clearly outdated and inadequate method of ordering experience, is fascinating. What Jones creates almost constitutes a strange and ungifted modern *marwnad*, that takes its blessing from the first 'seer' who saw that things were 'beautiful', but can no longer render their individual intensity and immensity. And thus the Sublime and its failure takes its vital place in this Welsh rhapsody ('Vast heaven was small everywhere, and happened less' [*CP*, 115]). That television has obliterated Shader Twm's sense of order is evident in the form that the four frenzied stanzas of part II adopt. Each stanza is a collection of vivid and anguished natural images, their fragility celebrated in defiance of the chaos and expansive disarray that the new medium has introduced into this old artist's life ('*never again will he subject himself to such an hour of confused torment*' [*CP*, 115]). The sense that what has been reassuringly singular and secure has somehow yielded to the anarchy of pluralism and disturbed the sense of where one's immediate environment begins and ends, is painfully evoked in the turbulent and impassioned reaction ('And the blood-soaked shadows rose, as dead, the children / swarmed screaming across the shattered sunlight of every broken wall' [*CP*,115]). How this unsettled haunted state of being seeps into and forces the subsequent interrogation of history and readdressing of culture and nation, is logically uncertain. However, such a vital shift in psyche and perception implicates all that follows. Confining its vision to a small box firing a barrage of connected and unconnected images necessarily has a profound effect upon the way in which a nation perceives and constructs itself, especially if one interprets the 'new medium' not simply as television itself, but includes the launch of the Welsh-language channel in the 1980s. What is then under discussion is a whole new means of imaging Wales as a nation, that could call into

question all that has gone before, and certainly implicates the role of both *Bardd* and artist in the construction of late twentieth-century Wales.

It is not until Part IV that the idea of 'Wales' begins to openly emerge from the shadows cast by Twm's private musings. The preoccupation that has been implied and suggested in the deeper places of the language suddenly pierces the surface. The opening italics read thus:

> *Shader still drowsing, regrets his fate as a failed painter, dreams of his alternative career as saviour of his country, and endures a vision of his ideal Wales* (*CP*,118)

That he 'endures a vision of his ideal Wales' is telling. The vision, a product of an over-active deluded imagination, is forced upon Twm against his wishes, or at least without control. The suggestion that idealising the nation is somehow a product of an unstable mind is implicit, as is the fact that the actual act of idealising the nation is something so instinctive that it is beyond human control. Alternatively, or at the same time, one can also read this act of endurance as the symptomatic pain of the ideal colliding inevitably with the real. For Twm to shift from the preoccupation with failure to dreams of heroism in this manner is not simply a delusional means of escape or a Romantic reaction against reality. This process of imagining exhibits exactly the way in which the public idea of 'nation' is given universal substance and relevance through the marketing of grandiose historical claims. On a basic level, the passage exemplifies the way in which national heroes are imagined and re-thought as giants and how poets such as Jones ostensibly 'construct' history. There is little

difference between the grandiose claims and dreams of a manic depressive, and those that are created to give credence to a particular idea of nationhood. Most specifically for Wales, the subsequent poetry challenges some of the foundational assumptions of Welsh nationalism.

Homi Bhabha writes:

> The recurrent metaphor of landscape as the inscape of national identity emphasizes the quality of light, the question of social visibility, the power of the eye to naturalize the rhetoric of national affiliation and its forms of collective expression.[13]

In *Seven Keys to Shaderdom* Jones is absolutely, yet ineffectually, concerned with 'the power of the eye': Shader's one eye is symbolically vital to his *inability* to represent Wales, and thus he cannot 'naturalize [...] rhetoric', only dream of alternatives. 'The question of social visibility' is integral to all of Jones's poetic excursions into the idea of his nation. The 'quality of light' haunts his work. Welsh landscapes are usually drowned in an artificial light, visionary yet surreal, that both clarifies and distorts the ability to see. That Shader Twm is a failed 'landscape painter' thus requires little explication. (Jones has been an equivalent painter of landscape in language throughout his career, developing an ornate, yet often abstract, descriptive style in his chosen medium: words.)

Jones appropriates the 'recurrent metaphor' of nation from the Welsh language and offers a counter-narrative to the 'naturalized rhetoric' that came to

characterise early twentieth century Welsh Nationalism. Jones's reactive counter-rhetoric is one that prioritises the working people whose voices Jones believes to have been silenced by the dominant classes (be they Welsh or English). What is expressed in the first section of Part IV is an example of how, in the words of Bhabha, 'the present of the people's history...is a practice that destroys the constant principles of the national culture that attempt to hark back to a "true" national past, which is often represented in reified forms of realism and stereotype'.[14] It is these 'reified forms' and stereotypes Jones attacks when Twm claims that 'this land never did belong / except in belted out anthem, or in small-voiced / giglots' sentimental scream, to us, to Gwerin Cymru" (*CP*, 119). It cannot be accidental that *Gwerin*, a Welsh word for the 'folk' is not italicised, when the otherness of all Welsh signs are marked as such in the poem. That the concept of the 'Gwerin' is thus become, like the word itself, the rightful possession of both languages is significant when considering that imagining the people as one body is being posited in defiance of the divisive pedantries of linguistics.

Interestingly this part (IV) begins with the lines, 'I, Twm, walker of these hills a thousand times/above Tywi's loveliness...' (*CP*, 119) in which an extensive vision of the land and its histories is claimed. Yet it is one that apologises for itself, attempts to obscure its inflammatory observations by being one entire confused sentence of fact and indignant exclamations. This chaos of 'revelations' about his nation is driven by the clumsy rhythms of a single sentence to the final two lines and this is interesting given that they diminish the relevance of the Welsh language in his vision of Wales. Twm's location on the 'hills' is redolent of Romanticism, as is the concern with the mountains, but the over-inflated, self-indulgent, and slightly unhinged declamatory 'I'

is perhaps more reminiscent of the English language tradition that evolved in nineteenth-century American poetry. It presents an unyielding and absolutely defining individuality that like Whitman's 'I' in 'Song of Myself' is forceful, all-consuming and obliterating of all other assertions of experience and as such becomes the conduit for a silenced nation voicing a claim on its territory. This is a determinedly egocentric counter narrative designed to overwhelm all other domineering claims to land and nation. In Jones this may verge on a burlesque of Romanticism, if you like, and such a burlesque is fascinating when we are considering ideas of nationhood that fall somewhere between the overbearing orthodoxy of England and the desperate domineering that the Welsh-language culture of Wales often slipped into in its early self-defensive twentieth-century form.

The italicised introduction that prefaces the poetry introduces Twm's manic delusion of being 'saviour of his country', perhaps one that Jones himself secretly harboured when he became politically involved in the literary politics of his country. However, the fact that what ensues is contained in the rubric of dreaming redeems the extremity of some of the ideas. For Jones the idea of being a *failed* 'saviour' also gives expression to a more poignant self-criticism: veiled references to his own labours for his nation and its literature cannot be overlooked when reading these lines. Jones felt he had failed the people by representing them only indirectly via literature and language, and this self-accusation is forced into relief by the far more physical world of action that his double, Twm, references ('Roaring wild like victorious Rebecca' [*CP*, 119]) and imagines himself to inhabit ('being always of this earth, and earthy' [*CP*, 119]). The esoteric and abstract world of poetry and the arts from which Jones sought to defend his people and language is guiltily replaced in this 'ideal'

vision by the corporeal world of land, 'soil', 'sweat', and 'hands'. The following thirty breathless lines expound the socialist position from which he also questioned the integrity of Taliesin and Dafydd ap Gwilym. However, it is a position that he never fully commits to beyond hypothesis and suggestion. Here he takes an unapologetic stance in the controversially sensitive predicament of twentieth century Wales. Jones stands without question against those who hold the power and use it to oppress. It is as though Jones is relinquishing all the compromises he made for the sake of unifying Wales. The threat to Wales as a nation is now not the loss of the language but the plain fact that "this land, this never did belong,/except in belted-out anthem ... to us, to Gwerin Cymru". Jones goes on to imply that the *beirdd* are in part responsible for the theft of the land from the people by associating the poets with their aristocratic patrons' subjugation of the people in the middle ages ("*Noddwyr y beirdd, gormeswyr eu tenantiaid*" ['Patrons of the poets, Oppressors of the tenants'] *CP*, 119). The poets of Wales have been and are complicit in the oppression of the people and the theft of the land and there is no way of evading or repressing that fact.

This sets Jones in uncomfortable opposition not just to the Welsh language, but to all those who prioritised their poetic craft over social responsibility. 'And this', Shader says of social exploitation, 'was burdensome to my heart,/More so than seeing at the next fingerpost/Caerfyrddin spelt as Carmarthen' (*CP*, 119). There is no attempt to disguise this criticism of the national prioritisation of the language. Jones proffers an alternative idea of 'nation', one that is dependent not upon language and its ability to possess and represent the landscape truthfully, but upon the more insistent physical realities of land and the people who work it. Through Twm's dreaming, Jones explores the idea of true possession of the land as connected not with language and

power but with action, and material labour. He asserts a physical possession rather than an abstract monetary ownership. Always the palpability of the land is emphasised, corporeal bodies in direct animal contact with earth, hands, feet, and soil and toil:

> The land itself ...
> The soil beneath my feet, toiled at, dug,
> Dunged, ploughed, harvested, sweated into
> These thousand years, all profitless, my ancestors
> With these poor hands, all three green fields
> Lifted up, in joy... (*CP*, 119)

How far this implicates writers such as R.S. Thomas, who mobilised the peasantry (particularly through the figure of 'Iago Prytherch') as the forgetful, negligent and yet utterly ethnic representative of Wales is interesting. In 'Out of the Hills'[15] Thomas writes of the traditions lost by a slightly less heroic Welsh peasantry with 'sallow skull' and 'scaly eye' and a weak dreaming spirit. These poor people, the celebrated workers of Jones's poem, are become the vacant betrayer of Welsh culture and tradition and this is clearly being challenged by Jones, as is the fact that they are inevitably claimed by the land they abandoned. Thomas concludes:

> no, wait for him here...be this then his fingerpost
> Homeward. The earth is patient: he is not lost (1)

Two attitudes towards the working Welsh people are coming into conflict via this subtle dialogue of allusions to R.S.Thomas. Jones counters Thomas's Romantic idea of the earth as 'a frail form broken beneath his tread' ('A Labourer'[16]) with the idea of the people broken by the strength of the land as it is forced to yield a harvest not simply of fruit but of national ideology. The allusions are subtle but incendiary. Fingerposts, homes, earth. It is not difficult to see how the superior tone of Thomas's poem could bother Glyn Jones and infiltrate his own work. How his stance could be seen as aristocratic, conservative and offensive, as Thomas castigates 'these poor hands' and shackles them fundamentally to an idea of Wales they have not necessarily chosen for themselves. For Thomas the land is an ominous and authoritative parent seeking to restrain and reclaim its aberrant children, and they have only the illusion of escape. Jones's unspoken and yet implicit criticism is that he skirts dangerously close to the prostitution of his workers and thus to an idea of Wales without a care for their humanity.[17] A brief reference to the poem 'Servant'[18] can only underline how Thomas's work must antagonise Jones's own aversion to writing over rather than of and to the people. He begins 'You served me well Prytherch' acknowledging the peasant as tool for his own devices 'capable of the one crop /which is the bread of truth that I break'.[19]

For Jones, the language is not 'the bread of truth', the people are, and their plight is 'more burdensome...than seeing at the next fingerpost/Caerfyrddin spelt as Carmarthen' (*CP*, 119). Thus, the Welsh language becomes an abstraction, a peripheral signatory, rather than being integral to the identity of the nation. That the linguistic interpretation of landscape takes precedence over the landscape itself is shown to be hollow. Power to define a nation, for Jones, cannot be purely symbolic, cannot reside

in the ownership of words and the manipulation of one true language to master what it describes. It can only be defined by the direct and common experience of the land and the people who work it, and only when founded in this can any language have real meaning. Here Jones challenges some very entrenched Welsh-language ideology and subsequently undermines some of the most famous Welsh-language poems which insist upon the centrality of language for translating the meaning of their landscape. There may well even be direct allusions to Waldo Williams's iconic poems, 'Cymru a Chymraeg' ('Welsh and Wales')[20] and 'Mewn Dau Gae' ('In Two Fields')[21] in that one clause – 'all three green fields / lifted up'. Glyn Jones is thus radically revising the prevailing national rhetoric to re-position the people at the heart of nationhood. Waldo Williams famously writes:

> These mountains, only one language can lift them,
> Give them their freedom, against a sky of song.[22]

Jones counters this decisively. The 'sudden enlightener', the 'sea of light', as Conran translates Williams's Welsh in 'In Two Fields', is answered by Jones with Twm's own 'blinding crashes of High voltage revelation'. The gentle restorative Romantic vision of 'Mewn Dau Gae' is challenged by a more violent revolutionary stance and it becomes plain to see that Jones's pathological suspicion of Romanticism and his own vulnerabilities towards its lures, is also symbolic of his suspicion of the way in which the Welsh language uses the tools and rhetoric of Romanticism to mobilise its domineering brand of nationalism at the expense of the people. However, in a later passage, when Twm goes on to imagine the de-industrialisation of Wales, his own

brand of revolutionary idealism becomes ridiculed and undercut by the same kind of romanticism that seems symptomatic of all constructions of nation:

> All our towns
> I soon dismantled and the cities I reduced
> To the dimensions and beatitude of diminutive St. Davids (*CP*, 121).

All purist ideas of nation thus end in utopian homogeneity. Thus, this sequence becomes an inflammatory exposé of how all forms and registers of language, leadership and heroics become as curdled as those that initially provoked rebellion.

It is not simply the iconic poetry of Wales that Jones subverts and parodies in this passage. As Meic Stephens observes in the notes to the poem (*CP*, 164), 'Cymru, with all my faults I love thee still' is a bastardisation of Cowper's line 'England with all thy faults I love thee still'.[23] Not only does it appropriate a phrase of English nationalism for Wales, but it also conflates and confounds 'I' and 'Thy', self and nation so that the individual and his culture become synonymous. That the faults of the individual can implicate the state of the nation is especially pertinent for twentieth- century Wales, where individual actions and/or failures to act can call the reality of the nation into question. A nation is only as real as it is imagined and remembered to be. Jones's poem takes memories as its focus, and is thus constructed by them and this again is significant in a nation where historical and linguistic memory is so unequivocally upheld and celebrated. In such a state the memories of the individual do come to have an exaggerated and intrinsic importance to the reality of the nation. The poem Jones borrows from, 'The Task',[24] is a long ruminative

satirical poem on the state of England, and the particular section from which this quotation is lifted considers the losses of a nation and its resilience. There are a number of parallels that seep beyond the edges of the borrowed line from Cowper's eighteenth century poem into Jones's twentieth century work, not least the consideration of freedom, independence, identity, territorial possession, nationhood and the artistic (poetic) process. All are requisitioned and mobilised in *Seven Keys to Shaderdom*. English verse is plundered by Jones to give voice to Welsh nationalism, an act of reverse colonisation perhaps, or rather an action that commandeers and takes hostage *all* inflated and abstracted notions of nationalism as irrelevant and ultimately meaningless when attention is shifted from ideas to the people they supposedly serve. Paradoxically, it is the people that deconstruct the nation.

The fact that Jones subverts the dominant national narrative and proposes an alternative whilst inhabiting the language and symbolism of Llwyarch Hen creates an interesting paradox and reveals how creatively fertile the antagonisms of Wales can be. The appropriation of Llywarch Hen's lament as a medium for the plaintive state of Shader Twm reveals the complex dynamic of Jones's position. His inheritance, as poet, is exactly that which also symbolizes the subjugation of the people Twm imagines saving. Jones's two ideals, Poetry and People, seem to be as incompatible in his last poem as they were in 'Poet and Peasant' (*CP,* 180-1) one of his earliest works. Arguably this is one reason why his central character / voice must be a painter, an artist and not a writer, an alter ego who is not embroiled in quite the same predicament as Jones, whose primary medium is not language, and whose art does not have the kind of historical cultural and ideological baggage that poetry inevitably carries.

Through the dynamic of Soaptruck and Shader's strange relationship of situation rather than sympathy, Jones reveals exactly how two such apparently hostile ideas can be interdependent and symbiotic. It is Soaptruck's 'practical politics' that has inspired Twm's own forays into the political world. In an absurd parody of two brands of national rhetoric Jones explores how many opposing ideas of Wales can exist alongside each other, influence each other and even be reliant upon each other. Soaptruck's 'practical politics' is an impossibly right-wing act of cultural repression. He proposes to deny all the 'otherness' that undermines the purity of the Welsh nation by digging a ditch and projecting all notions of what is alien into England. The extremity of his stance approaches racialism and certainly enters the realms of the discriminatory; however, it does expose something fundamental askew with all 'pure' forms of national rhetoric and implicates the elitist nationalisms of those who place the language before the people. Soaptruck's position is not an accurate representation of any recognisable Welsh politics. Machiavellian in its extremity, it is a caricature of some of the more strident and uncompromising notions of Wales that emerged in the twentieth century. The historical references to the sale of reservoirs, and even to the defending of the dyke in the manner of Llywarch's determined stand at the ford, are sufficient proof that something of substance is being fundamentally queried in these lines.

It is amusing that in introduction to this passage the stage directions, (the *cyfarwydd*) reads:

> Shader entertains, or is entertained by his landlord, a perpetual babbler, talkative in his drink ... Shader's aim is always to staunch the flow of Soaptruck's anecdotes, which he admires and dreads (*CP,* 119)

In a grotesque parody of the relationship between landlord and tenant, patron and poet that Jones referenced in Welsh only six lines earlier ('*Noddwyr y beirdd, gormeswyr eu tenantiad*'), the tableau of a King and his mouthpiece is presented. However, unlike Llywarch Hen who can not bear to converse with his silenced 'Frank',[25] Shader Twm and Soaptruck's roles' are undefined and interchangeable. Soaptruck even takes his place 'on Shader's orange box throne'. It is Soaptruck's clumsy politics of battle and action that inspires Shader Twm to re-imagine (and seize for himself) grandiose schemes of glory, what he calls a 'painter's politics', in which he becomes the type of hyperbolized hero that a king would once have been. Here, it is the artist that struggles to 'staunch the flow of Soaptruck's anecdotes'. In this there is a subtle suggestion that language and meaning have always really been in the possession of the patrons, the landlords, not the poets and especially not the tenants who suffer from its 'lumbering' excesses rather than being liberated by its agile ability to express their lives. The superfluity of words also points to the particular vehicle/nature of Welsh conflict and irresolution in the twentieth century. Jones also addresses that particular type of orality that characterises the Valleys, the kind of shorthand anecdotal storytelling that is the modern mutation of the *cyfarwydd's* legacy to the South Welsh.

It is in the next section that Llywarch Hen's stand against the Saxons in Powys becomes relevant again, as Soaptruck's own brand of Welsh defensive

nationalism seems to find sustenance and motivation in the earlier physical battling for the integrity of Welsh principalities. As Llywarch Hen defended his kingdom against the invaders so too would Soaptruck defend his Wales.

> A deep ditch, yes a grave, yes, country long
> This must be dug the further side of Offa's Dyke – (*CP,* 120)

In terms of nationalisms and their emergence, what is explored in this section is not two mutually opposed notions of Wales, but two intrinsically related, even symbiotic, ideals. Shader the artist feeds off Soaptruck, is inspired by him, even though their ideas of their country are so fundamentally unalike. Soaptruck rants but allows himself to be distracted by Shader from the intensity of his politics by reference to his son, Dai. The dynamics of their apparently ridiculous exchange is founded in a truth that is far more profound than it appears. Their conflict contests difference, but is born of a strange similarity, and need for that difference and this is the essence of the strange undefined personal relationship between soaptruck and Shader Twm. Equally it is a microcosmic reflection of the dynamics that formed the multiple conceptions of 'nation', which characterises the self-conscious development of twentieth-century Wales.

Even the versions of national identity propounded here, antagonistic though they may be, seem insignificant, inadequate, even meaningless, in their failure to accommodate all of Wales. No 'national theory' ever has fully done so. The margins of Wales are too extensive to allow for such singularity. Theories of national redemption and Welsh independence are revealed to be hopelessly idealistic and the

pipedreams of foolish old men. Even when articulated with passion, they are somehow outdated, meaningless, the melodramatic ramblings of madmen and vagrants. The children of the 1930's are as much exiles as they ever were, but now they are exiles from a Wales they are not even familiar with. Rooms with only one skylight, where vision is restricted to one eye, are not the locations for accurate representation only for deluded imaginings. It is exactly this inability to imagine a whole that feeds the failure of Twm and is the concern of part VI of the sequence, which closes with a praise poem to 'the vast tree of bare / Winter's black bones' that is, in all seasons, symbol of the Welsh nation.

> Great tree, marvellous great tree, fecund, beautiful,
> Before your all-ness my brush fell helpless from my fingers. (*CP*, 127)

The tree renders the artist incapable of representation. The 'allness' that is perceived cannot be replicated by 'fingers' that are become victims of the Welsh 'sublime', which is essentially itself: the country that defies any desire for order or mapping and yet desperately requires it for its own integrity and longevity.

I have considered the significance of the tree, as metaphor for the divided culture of Wales, in an earlier chapter.[26] The Oak tree, *derwen,* has a particular meaning for Wales and this is significant when considering this meditation on trees as metaphoric vehicle for death, life, inheritance and cultural regeneration. Jones states

> The Bare oak, old
> Wind-gnawed bones up there, black on the bleak skyline, lives,

Sinks joyfully into the underworld the great questing

Arm of its roots – (*CP*, 125)

The silhouette of the tree, dark and insistent, and interrupting the skyline, drawing the eye from the infinite to the specific, is a potent and striking image, that disturbs any attempt the eye may make to look vaguely and abstractly beyond it. This is not the first occasion that the winter skeleton of a starved tree has been rendered gloriously, vigorously and so meaningfully by Jones prose. It is vitally suggestive of the way in which even the areas perceived to be so poisoned by anglicisation, can be such a shifting yet resilient entity, can appear so lifeless and yet be 'sink[ing] joyfully into the underworld the great questing / Arm of its roots'. Apparent old age and decrepitude can be both humanly (in the case of Shader Twm and Jones himself) and culturally deceptive. Life is not necessarily to be located where appearances may most suggest it, and deaths can be as fertile for culture as bushfire is for the South African Protea.

The subsequent stanza applies the same theorizing metaphor to 'inheritance' and in the process reveals an indirect yet strident criticism of purist ideals of culture ('it is not an element, is never chemically pure, / rather an alloy, an amalgam'). It is the glue that holds different substances together: cultural inheritance is that which unites the different groups of a nation, not a prescriptive substance which determines who belongs inside or outside the national boundaries. There is a reference to Saunders Lewis's pessimistic poem 'The Deluge' in the following lines and this reveals Jones's attitude towards any strident nationalism that considers change to be a threat to cultural continuity:

Inventive man can never staunch the flow of time's

Beneficent or swamping current, only in part cajole

Its deluge to his will, to evil or to blessedness.

When all is finished nothing shall come to an end. (*CP*, 126)

Saunders Lewis's iconic poem 'The Deluge, 1939',[27] links the depravity of the industrial devastation of a nation with fall into warfare merely by the addition of the date after the title. The conflict within Wales is thus forever associated with the largest war ever to be fought and this reveals exactly the strength of purist essentialist ideas of Wales, the resilience of that which Jones is resisting. Lewis writes definitively of death, of dregs, of carcasses and slag as though an unequivocal and irrevocable end is past or nigh. Jones refutes these strict linear notions of time, life and death, that provoke urgency, insecurity and over sensitive states of alert, and offers a more cyclic organic alternative to this brilliant and yet unyielding Welsh Waste land whose meaning has arguably pervaded far beyond its allotted time. 'The Waste Land' as a hymn to a lost / changing world is fixed in its modernist period, historically anchored, but the sentiments of Lewis's Welsh equivalent are historically flexible as they give voice not simply to a cultural urgency, but to a national rhetoric. Jones is attempting to put such rhetoric into a broader, if non-specific, historical context, in which it loses its dominance and takes its place among other rhetorics and cultural inheritances. Considering this, one does wonder how far the anxiety of the inter war years fuelled and provided a suitable if exaggerated language for the development of Welsh nationalism: how far the apocalyptic fears of the period

became a historical lens which infected and distorted the interpretation of Welsh culture at the time.

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Is Glyn Jones's late poetic sequence a failed and unfinished allegory? Or is it an appropriation of allegory specifically suggesting that the nature of Wales is beyond formal representation? And does the form fail because it is inadequate for the task? For Wales to be explained consistently within such a form would undermine the central preoccupation of the poem, which is that it defies exactly that kind of representation. Shader's failure is both the failure of his art and his nation to conform to any expectation of resolved wholeness. That he turns this failure into a self annihilation is melancholic. That he uses Llywarch Hen as mask, a figure who through a grandiose sense of duty, valour, and heroism sacrificed his sons for the preservation of his territory is almost a form of self abuse. Such a punishment seems extreme for one whose only failure is to render his nation on canvas. Has an equivalent betrayal occurred? Is art that fundamental to the nation? Clearly the guilt of Jones as artist in this regard is intense. He believes the artist's role to be intrinsic and vital to the country and people it recreates. Therefore, a failure to adequately represent them *is* akin to the sending of one's sons out into a battle that is inevitably to be defeat. Words are the tools of warfare, the armour that shields and protects life. And so, words that are inadequate for this vital task fail in the battle, and undermine the integrity of all who wielded them. This belief in the role of the artist to uphold a nation is unequivocally Welsh, and so the anxiety of being unequal to such a role plagues Jones's work in spite of himself. To the end, his is a chronic fear that he does

not meet the privileged criteria for belonging to Wales, because of the language he chooses to use.

The final section of this sequence sees the requisitioning of Llywarch Hen's language to vocalise the predicament of Shader Twm. A note of tragic-comedy is struck:

> Ach, I am old, bewildered.
> I hide in my head.
> My cracked
> Brow looks high, my tall face towering
> Sheer as a cliff of beef. (*CP*, 127)

The conflation of the human face with landscape, and flesh with meat, is symbolic of the same cultural/individual conflation and confusion that has characterised the poem. It is a grotesque self-portrait. However, this is as much a parody of Llywarch Hen as it is of the character Jones has created to shoulder the burden of Welsh representation. There is here a mockery of attitudes that suggest that the landscape somehow becomes the expression of the people that live in it - that they are spiritually, even bodily, linked. And this is quite a brave and controversial criticism of the view, so influential in the middle years of the twentieth century, that the geography of Wales has been a bastion of national survival.

What this poem does is to take every literary role, every literary tool, every conception and every means of conceiving Wales through language, and parody it.

Through this Jones offers two alternatives: the possibility of a pristine space beyond the deconstruction, after each ridiculed voice has cancelled every other out, or the acceptance of Wales as a plethora of differently conceived places, and a recognition of the country as a patchwork of conflicting imaginings. Shader Twm concludes his own praise poem to his nation as follows:

> Great tree, marvellous great tree, fecund, beautiful,
> Before your all-ness my brush fell helpless from my fingers. (*CP,* 126)

Glyn Jones is captivated and still held prisoner by the language of the Romantic Sublime and this seems excusable as he is mobilising it to express national diversity, and not merely the impossibility of assimilating all the pieces of what is seen into a coherent whole.

The more I read this sequence the more I begin to believe that this is actually a most subversive text, subtly questioning other Welsh works and challenging any number of institutionalised conceptions of Welsh identity, particularly those that locate and validate their origins in the Welsh language. What else can Jones be referring to when he writes of inheritance that can never be inherited in exactly the same form? The possibility that there could be frequent, yet subtly disguised, references and allusions to Welsh-language poems throughout the text makes this work an especially seductive and enigmatic study of inheritance, identity and national conflict in twentieth century Wales.

[1] Glyn Jones, *The Saga of Llywarch the Old: A Reconstruction with Verse Interludes* (London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1955). There is a reference copy that can be accessed in the LIC closed store at Swansea University library. It is believed that Llwyarch Hen was a historical figure, possibly related to Urien Rheged, and whose history therefore corresponded with that recounted by Taliesin and Aneirin in the sixth century. The copy of the saga that exists is in the form of poetry and has been dated to the middle of the ninth century. It is surmised and accepted that between the poetic interludes there would have existed prose situating the verse in a larger narrative. Modern scholarship (established firmly by Sir Ifor Williams) also accepts that Llywarch Hen was the subject of such a saga, and not, as the work may imply, its author, who remains anonymous. Despite this dating it is still considered to be evidence of, and originating from, an earlier established (seventh century) tradition of oral historical narrative and poetic storytelling arguably one that coincided with that of Taliesin and Aneirin in the earliest recorded era of Welsh Literature. The saga is fragmentary in form, and opens in the North where the death of Urien (the great warrior Prince) subsequently displaces and disorientates his retinue. It follows Llwyarch Hen back to Wales, where he dwells humbly at first and sees him raised to a princely status which he, and his many sons are then forced to repeatedly defend against attackers. He loses every son in defence of the ford that allows narrow entrance to his kingdom, and his lament is both for Gwen, his last and youngest son, and for his own incapable and frustrated lonely age. It is a saga riven by loss, and the gradual erosion and collapse of secure territory. For an excellent background to the saga and ninth century saga poetry, see both A.O.H. Jarman 'Saga Poetry: The Cycle of Llywarch Hen', *A Guide to Welsh Literature Vol. I* eds. A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (Cardiff: UWP, 1992) 82-97 and also *The New Companion to the Literature of Wales*, ed. Meic Stephens (Cardiff: UWP,1998) 87. See also Sir Ifor Williams, *Lectures on Early Welsh Poetry* (Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944), *The Beginnings of Welsh Poetry* (Cardiff: UWP, 1972) and the pamphlet, 'The Poems of Llywarch Hen' (London: Humphrey Milford, 1933).

[2] See Tony Conran, trans. and intro., 'i. Llywarch' and 'ii. Llywarch the Old', *Welsh Verse* (Bridgend: *Seren,* 1967, 2003)120-26. He writes that despite the lack of explanatory prose 'much of it ... is highly impressive as it stands ... naked and challenging and bleak.' He provides only the basic explanatory prose so as not to detract from this. Unlike Jones, he does not take on the role of *Cyfarwydd.*

[3] Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (London and New York: Routledge, 2005) 209.

[4] 'Wooden Crook, it is Autumn ...Wooden Crook , it is Winter...', Tony Conran trans., *Welsh Verse* (125).

[5] Michael Ondaatje, *Divisidero* (London: Bloomsbury, 2007) 142.

[6] Glyn Jones, *The Saga of Llywarch the Old: A Reconstruction with Verse Interludes* (London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1955) 35.

[7] Ibid. 35.

[8] Samuel Beckett, *The Complete Dramatic Works* (London: Faber and Faber, 1986) 92-134.

[9] Op. cit. 21.

[10]Glyn Jones, *The Saga of Llywarch the Old: A Reconstruction with Verse Interludes* (London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1955).

[11] A.O.H. Jarman, 'Saga Poetry: The Cycle of Llywarch Hen', *A Guide to Welsh Literature,* Vol. I. eds. A.O.H. Jarman and Gwilym Rees Hughes (Cardiff: UWP, 1992) 89. Jarman states 'Here Llywarch is calling in question the martial idea which has governed his life as a warrior. It is the ideal of the *Gododdin,* the pursuit of honour and renown through unyielding valour on the battle-field. He has brought up twenty-four sons to conduct their lives according to this ideal, and for his sake they have all been sacrificed'.

[12] Vernon Watkins, *The Collected Poems of Vernon Watkins*, (Ipswich: Golgonooza, 2000) 224.

[13] Op. cit. 205.

[14] Op. cit. 218.

[15] R.S.Thomas, *Collected Poems 1945-1990* (London: Phoenix, 2000 [2004]) 1.

[16] Ibid. 2.

[17] Kirsti Bohata, *Post-colonialism Revisited* (Cardiff: UWP, 2004) 81. Bohata reviews how the rural working landscape became 'the cornerstone' of early-mid Welsh twentieth-century nationalism. One wonders how far Glyn Jones is involved in a challenging dialogue with this established Welsh-language myth of the 'Gwerin'.

[18] Op. cit. 146.

[19] Ibid. 146.

[20] Tony Conran, trans., *The Peacemakers: Waldo Williams* (Llandysul: Gomer,1997) 122-3.

[21] Ibid. 130-1.
[22] Ibid. 122-3.
[23] William Cowper, 'The Task', *The Task and Other Selected Poems* (London: Longman, 1994) 91. The possibility that this satirical eighteenth century poem could be read even more closely alongside Jones's twentieth century work is significant. For if Jones were indebted to two long patriotic poetic sequences, one English and one ancient Welsh, then this would only reinforce the experimental manner in which he mediates two cultures, both in harmony and in antagonism, through his work.
[24] Ibid. 91.
[25] 'I shall not talk even for one hour tonight,/My retinue is not very large,/ I and my Frank, round our Cauldron' (Translation from Sir Ifor Williams, *Early Welsh Poetry* [Dublin: Dublin Institute for Advanced Studies, 1944] 29).
[26] I am not the first to have noticed the implications of the metaphor of the tree for Wales and for Glyn Jones's work, and given the expansive insistence of the metaphors of roots and branches throughout Welsh discourse, will not be the last. See Harri Roberts, 'A Tower of Babel: Heteroglossia, the Grotesque, and the (De)construction of Meaning in Glyn Jones's *The Valley, the City, the Village* and Niall Griffith's *Grits', Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Studies* 7 (2001-2) 106-29. See also, John Pikoulis, 'Llansteffan, Merthyr, Samarkand: The Question of Beauty in the Poetry of Glyn Jones's, *Welsh writing in English* 5 (1999)1-16. Here Pikoulis considers the same passage of *Seven Keys to Shaderdom.* Pages 22-24 are concerned primarily with the trope of the tree that I also consider above. However, Pikoulis focuses upon the individual for explication of the metaphor, whilst I wish to expose another layer of potential meaning that implicates the nation.
[27] Saunders Lewis, 'The Deluge, 1939', *Selected Poems,* trans. Joseph Clancy (Cardiff: UWP, 1993) 10-12.

Chapter Five

Glyn Jones: *Cyfarwydd*

I noted in the last chapter that in the reconstruction of the Llywarch Hen saga, Jones plays *cyfarwydd* as he re-imagines the prose that would once have been integrated with the existent poetry to create a more coherent narrative whole. This fixing of language, which would once have been fluid and entirely at the discretion of the teller at every telling, only serves to emphasise the impact that the demise of the oral tradition can have upon the interpretation of history and its figures, and how in this respect the printed text can diminish the infinite possibilities of oral storytelling. Jones's text is particular to a certain time and guided by a specific interpretation of the 'Llywarch Hen Saga' (which combines the definitive academic study of Sir Ifor Williams and Jones's own fictional reading of the poetry within those boundaries determined by Williams in the introduction to the work.[1]). The reconstruction has been orchestrated for the benefit of the reader, not the listener and as it is fixed in space the story is told the same way over and over again. Even though a 'Barthian' reader can transform that text, Jones, the teller now dead, can never again tell this tale in any other way. This is perhaps the most profound shift that the written text inflicts upon the *cyfarwydd.* Not only does the publication of a story limit the retelling, as market forces prevent the telling of the same story over and over again in print, but a storyteller as writer must select one single avenue through his material, imagine one single ideal audience, rather than a plethora of changing listeners with varying needs, and thus diminish the possibilities of communicating all the potential meanings that the story has the capacity to evoke via the telling.

To clarify the use of the term *Cyfarwydd* in the context of this chapter, the Welsh term for the storyteller is used as a sign for the various and distinct manifestations of oral narrative and exchange that Jones consciously and unconsciously explores and reforms in his work. The figure of the *Cyfarwydd* is also used as a bridge between the two cultures of Wales, as the garrulousness of characters becomes in effect a measure of the resilient presence of the Welsh language culture both alongside the English language and most importantly for the purposes of this thesis, within it. Manifestations of the traditional figure of the *Cyfarwydd* are primarily located in Welsh and most frequently in rural west Wales. Where the storytellers belong to the Anglicized valleys or the English speaking cities of south Wales the differences in the oral form of expression are significant. That the shadow of the original Welsh storyteller still emerges in a hybridised fashion via tall tales, the culture of verbal battling and sharp sardonic quipping, becomes further proof of the fact that the Welsh Language culture is never far beyond the grasp of the English language that Glyn Jones uses.

It is the purpose of this chapter to examine the way in which the influences of the oral tradition are manifested in Jones work: how he represents and recreates the skills, habits and location of the *cyfarwyddiaid*; how he adopts their mantle, explores and observes their mnemonics and reveals the way in which the original Welsh storyteller has morphed throughout history into a variety of different figures, continuing, exemplifying and developing varying legacies according to their cultural location in Wales. The traditional *cyfarwydd* held a position in the Bardic hierarchy that was inferior to that of the *beirdd.* Not being considered a craftsman, but a commoner, clumsier, artist, goes some way to explain how the role of the storyteller

has passed so unobtrusively to the unexpected and unheralded voices. Jones's storytellers are often humble or humbled, frequently they are unconscious of their narrative abilities and the heritage they represent. They tell tales because they know them like breathing,[2] and those characters who seek to draw attention to their stories are more often than not lying, or the spinners of tall and romantic tales that lead only to disillusion. Jones is anxious in so many instances to record the tenacity of the Welsh *cyfarywddiaid* and their stories to endure into the twentieth century and he experiments with his tools at the same time as observing the modern teller of tales in situ. Despite the rougher more discordant nature of his literary form, the *cyfarwydd* is a character who has defied his inferior status, and evolved to survive way beyond his allotted time in history. Like Taliesin, in order to escape extinction, the figure of the *cyfarwydd*[3] shifted its shape with astounding agility and dexterity and makes its presence uncompromisingly known in the work of Glyn Jones.

Critical consideration of the *cyfarwydd* necessarily raises questions about the boundaries between reality and fiction, truth and lies, the territories of life and the imagination and the place of story telling in the twentieth- century, which will be explored within the context of Glyn Jones's two important novels *The Valley, the City, the Village* (1956) and *The Island of Apples* (1965). The characterisation of the storyteller within Jones's works that interestingly betrays a debt to the *cyfarwydd*, but also fascinating is how the role of storyteller has evolved into the literate text and interacts with the more designing twentieth century narrative voice. Once story-telling becomes the domain of entirely subjective experience, it has mutated beyond the apportioned realm of cultural memory, and in the process undermines the notion of the history and the communal purpose it was initially intended to serve. Memory

itself becomes a questionable phenomenon, and history necessarily a fiction. The whole process of recording history through stories (the *cyfarwydd's* activity) is arguably undermined in *The Island of Apples*. The struggle between 'reality' (as far as it can be represented in a novel) and the fictions the imagination can transform it with, offers a stark critique of the reliability of traditional tale telling and the validity of it as a vehicle for historical memory. Dewi's utter surrender to Karl and his stories provoke uncertainties about the location of reality that are never quite satisfied. John Pikoulis has argued that *The Island of Apples* is entitled to be classed as one of the first instances of magic realism[4] 'alongside Gunter Grass's *Dog Days* or Gabriel Garciá Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*'[5] and it is perhaps no coincidence that magic realism is a genre mostly explored by those post-colonial cultures that do still have (or have consciously cultivated) strong literate attachments to an earlier oral and folk tradition that impinges upon a hybrid modernity and engages it in a difficult, often antagonistic, dialogue (South-America, Africa, Black America, India, Eastern Europe). Like these cultures, twentieth century Wales arguably retains a more culturally integrated tradition of orality than other Western societies. This could go some way to explain how such a book as *The Island of Apples* came to be written, where and when it was. In this novel, orality and the power of a storytelling tradition that is indigenous to Wales, is mobilised by Jones as a textual narrative device that explores how identity can be both restructured by and resistant to colonisation.

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Jones opens his translations of the *Hen Benillion* with the following stanza:

Dwedai hen ŵr llwyd o'r gornel,

'Gan fy nhad mi glywais chwedd,

A chan ei dad y clywsai yntau,

Ac ar ei ôl mi gofiais innau'.

The Grey old man said from the corner,

'I heard stories from my father,

And from his father he heard them,

After my father I recall them'.[6]

In this simple poetic fragment the dynamics of the oral narrative tradition are encapsulated and the archetypal figure of the Welsh *cyfarwydd* is evoked. The unassuming 'grey old man' sitting in 'the corner' is the self-obscured ('grey') craftsman who protects the communal memories of his tribe. He retains the histories and the myths that secure the society and the people's identity against time's changes and erosions. Sitting in the 'corner' he is both outside and irrevocably within (he wields the legacy of the 'father') his culture. He is a figure who observes and listens as much as he is compelled to speak and who is an outsider as much as he is integral to the community.

As Harri Roberts observes,[7] Jones celebrates this figure in the character of Uncle Gomer in *The Valley, the City, the Village.*[8] Uncle Gomer is equally 'grey', always perched at the edges of a room, telling his stories guiltily but compulsively in doorways, always alert to hostile discovery. Uncle Gomer is integral to the

representation of rural West Wales as his stories convey much that reveals the culture of the people he lives alongside. He also holds the greatest influence over Trystan, who is fascinated by his knowledge and his verbal prowess. Uncle Gomer not only 'tells' his village and his culture, the foil for both the city and the valley of this imagined Wales, but as the 'ideal' *cyfarwydd* he is the measure of Trystan's own narration. Jones also offers Uncle Gomer as prototype for his own work. At the same time as preserving the historical figure in the text he also holds up a mirror to his own storytelling, which is an innovative mix of the oral and the experimental literate traditions. In Jones's particular method of narration, the ancient (oral) and modern (literate) are proven to be interesting bedfellows and not as distant, nor distinct, as one may suppose.[9] The divergence from teleology that is a vital characteristic of most modern narrative structures, the dependence upon the vagaries of memory interrupting and shifting the flow of the action, is not so distant from the oral form of Uncle Gomer's divergent storytelling. It is plausible that what Trystan (and ostensibly Jones) admires is the fact that these tellers are able to sustain a broken yet coherent prose vocally via organic and intuitive mnemonics rather than relying on the superbly planned and frequently altered written page. The important question therefore is whether Glyn Jones is monumentalising the figure of the *cyfarwydd,* because as Walter Benjamin argues in his earlier essay 'The Storyteller',[10] the figure is becoming gradually extinct in the literate twentieth century. However, the fact that Jones's fascination with the storytellers of Wales anticipates the subsequent trend that swept through most post-colonial literatures seems to suggest that his frequent recourse to the storyteller and his craft is indicative of resurgence and resilience rather than demise. Post-colonial writers innovatively and traditionally reinvigorated their oral histories to recreate or reacquaint themselves with their own cultural identity.[11] That

Jones uses the *cyfarwydd* as the pivotal device for cultural overlap and fusion in Wales seems distinctly possible. This is especially true, considering the storyteller has become such a key figure in many of the greatest late twentieth-century texts in which contested cultural identities are explored. How far all of these tendencies to reclaim past narratives fall under the umbrella of a reconstructed and romanticised past is too large a question to dissect here. It would seem that the most resilient characteristics of a culture become those that are, at the same time, the most vulnerable.

In *The Valley, the City, The Village* the most adept and natural *cyfarwydd,* Uncle Gomer, is introduced after his less influential sisters, Trystan's aunts. This seems to be casting him as 'headliner' to their 'support'. Like Uncle Hughie, he is a grey figure, living in the shadow of his female relatives, and his storytelling tendencies are frowned upon by the dominant Aunt Rosa as much as Granny disapproves of Hughie's 'rubbish' and 'frivolity' (*VCV*, 52). Gomer's entrance is enmeshed in the description of the house, as though both come hand-in-hand on some fundamental level. Of the contents of *Môr Awelon* 'everything had a history which [...] uncle Gomer could recite' (*VCV*, 62), and one begins to understand the house to be a nation, and uncle Gomer's role to be keeper of the house as much as the *cyfarwydd* would have been an informal keeper of the nation's memory. This is insisted upon again two pages later when Trystan recalls:

> What *he* liked was to take out the family album from under an ornate but unstable oil lamp on top of the cupboard and talk volubly about the people whose photographs appeared in it (*VCV*, 64)

The sense of ritual in the opening of the family album evokes the older rites and customs of memorialising and storytelling that evolved from the early princely courts into this more private familial excursion into the past. The fact that the family history is kept beneath an unstable oil lamp, seems to emphasise the fragility of that history and the potential for memory to be lost or ruined by the very light that is intended to illuminate it. It soon becomes clear that the walls of the house are not boundaries for Uncle Gomer's histories. His experiences encompass the entire village and he recounts anecdotes and tales that he has both created and inherited via his hub of social contact, the forge.

The portrait of Uncle Gomer that Trystan paints is a meticulously drawn and accurately observed figure: that of the characteristic, even 'ideal' Welsh storyteller. Many of the observations coincide perfectly with subsequent anthological and sociological models of storytellers in predominantly oral cultures and this is testament either to the resilience of the *cyfarwydd* in Wales or at least to Jones's own Romantic desire to preserve and monumentalise the figure in his texts, as a vital piece of folk history. I suspect both are true. By paying such attention to the storyteller, Jones is obviously drawn closer to the Welsh-language heritage he is so conscious of losing.

In his seminal text *Orality and Literacy* Walter J. Ong describes two characteristics of orality that Uncle Gomer displays in abundance and other Jones characters possess to varying degrees.[12] One is the physicality of the storyteller, the fact that the story is not merely verbally recounted but physically performed. Ong refers to this predisposition of the storyteller to involve the entire body in the telling as 'verbomotor skills'.[13] The teller is possessed by his words and acts them out via

gesticulation and facial expression. Whilst Uncle Hughie may 'act both parts' of a dialogue 'in a suitable accent' (*VCV*, 46), Uncle Gomer is a one-man theatre:

> Gesticulating, acting, dropping into guttural tones, and waving his pipe about (*VCV*, 59)
>
> My Uncle's narrative had been accompanied by large hand actions, grimaces, pauses, spittings and pipe wavings. With his hand he stirred the air. (*VCV*, 61)

The stirring of the air can invoke nuances of magic and potion mixing, and storytelling is revealed to be a transformative experience both for the teller and the listener. The teller is physically overcome by his story, and the listener is drawn theatricality into the narrative in a manner than compels attention. Uncle Gomer is not the only one of Jones's story tellers to demonstrate such physicality when in the throes of a story.

Likewise, Tommy Vaughan Morgan, in the short story 'Bowen, Morgan and Williams' is equally expressive (he is "pink with acting his story" [*CS*, 185])[14] although his particular register seems to derive as much from the pulpit oratory as the traditional *cyfarywyddiaid*:

> Tommy was in a *hwyl* by now with a story to act and an audience to listen, his blue eyes were glittering like stars and his mouth was full of spit. When he was like this he seemed overflowing with energy and I had seen him posting a letter in the middle of a tale as though he was going to stuff his arm up to the elbow into the pillar box. (*CS*, 184-5)

That the storyteller transfixes and transforms the listeners by his physicality can be taken as read, but that he transforms his own reality is also evident in this description. The simple act of posting a letter becomes elaborated into a fantastic act, evidence that narrative and the process of tale-telling impinges upon the teller's ordinary actions as much as it transforms the actuality of the listener. Story tellers are in this sense vessels of great natural power, they are mediums 'overflowing with energy', physically emanating and dispersing the power their words describe. It is in this instance that the universality of such 'verbomotor' skills become peculiarly Welsh. Tommy is 'talking like the pit of the sea', a common idiom in the Welsh language. The rhythms of oral narrative are as insistent as the tides, even across the language borders in Wales.

In this instance, the reference to *Hwyl* evokes a completely different variant of Welsh storytelling, that of the non-conformist pulpit, in which the bible became the source of some of the most powerful and influential narrative of the nineteenth century. The preacher, or revivalist as wandering itinerant storyteller, transformed Welsh society and became a heroic figure, able to invoke a spectacularly imaginative and emotional responsiveness in his listener. The bible is full of stories, but the manner in which religion was presented to the Welsh people can itself be seen as an extension of and substitute for the *cyfarwydd* of earlier societies. The narrative of non-conformity adopted some of the most compelling characteristics of oral story telling to dominate the culture of Wales for centuries. (One could certainly postulate that Christ is the tallest story to tell of any.) The idealistic and transcendental dynamics of the 1904-5 Revival inspired the imagination and shaped the nature of the

people and their perceptions of their society in a manner that is redolent with the devices of the best storytellers. Glyn Jones himself thought it highly significant that he had been born in 1905 – the year the great Welsh religious revival led by Evans Roberts came to an end. It is also perhaps why, despite the attempt to discourage the prevalence of fictions, the traditions of the storyteller endured throughout this period.

Emyr Humphreys traces the tradition of the *bardd* as it shifts into non-conformity to find a register for cultural expression,[15] but one could equally counter this stance with the suggestion that it is the c*yfarwydd* who finally finds his official voice in the divergent religions of Wales. Jones perceives that it is the less official c*yfarywdd* and the lower orders of the oral tradition that lend themselves most easily to be vehicles that penetrate linguistic borders (it is no accident that the *Hen Benillion* fixated Jones for such an extensive period). The strict metre poetry of the *beirdd*, so integrated with the native language and the construction of national identity, is notoriously and divisively untranslatable, but that Welsh-language culture could breach language boundaries in less prescriptive formats is an interesting case. Whilst the *bardd* is vital to establishing the independent culture of Wales, the figure of the *cyfarwydd* could be equally vital for the union of both the linguistic cultures of Wales that Jones works so hard to effect. The literary negotiation is less ideologically problematic for Jones when engaging the storytellers than it is when invoking the 'high' poetry of Wales and its history, as crafted by the *beirdd.* That is not to say that the *cyfarwydd* and the *bardd* are entirely distinct, for their purpose and their material inevitably overlaps as does their cultural concern. However, the *cyfarwydd* is a less culturally contested (and indeed constructed) figure. As obscure 'grey' character, he

is more able to violate the cultural borders that have been rigidly assembled as much as they have evolved in Wales.

Ironically as shape-shifter and evader of those who pursue, the *cyfarwydd* is a far more effective Taliesin (or founding figure) for the 'Anglo-Welsh', than the *bardd* could ever be, as the spotlight is trained too relentlessly and insistently on the latter for him ever to adequately shift his shape into the English language. The *bardd* can rarely, if ever, be non-contentiously translated but maybe the *cyfarwydd* can be. That would certainly explain the lack of anxiety in the work of Jones when he considers the storyteller, as opposed to the torment, guilt, and uncertainty that seems to emerge every time he attempts to evaluate his relationship with the Welsh language *bardd.* This could also be accounted for, of course, by the fact that by proffering the *cyfarwydd* as the unofficial voice of Wales, Jones is able to circumvent the personal anxiety that the politics and conservatism of the *beirdd* provoke. The *cyfarwydd*, the storyteller, is more compatible with the socialist preoccupations he is troubled by, than the *bardd* could ever satisfy. The *bardd* is the voice of the ruling classes, whereas Jones is able to adopt the storytellers and adapt them as the anonymous voices of the people.

Returning to the consideration of oral 'verbomotor' skills in the light of this ideological preference, it is interesting to note that spoken language is only one tool of the *cyfarwydd* and this becomes especially pertinent when one is considering how far a culture can transcend linguistic borders. Once the semiotics belongs to the face and the body is it fair to claim that cultural meaning is permitted only to those who share a common tongue? What aspects of a culture can be conveyed by body

language despite, and in spite of, the borders of language? Could Trystan understand the lines on his Granny's hands any less if he did not speak her language? Could he still read her 'wrinkled oak-bark face'? But what of Uncle Gomer's narratives, those complex organisms that rise like dense foliage colonising the air, would they stand by hands and body alone? What could transcend the boundaries of language via the body? Trystan is concerned with the narrative dexterity of Uncle Gomer and this suggests that the dramatic nuances are not able to penetrate such borders, and yet something has clearly evolved beyond linguistics in the tendencies of the other valley men and women to tell tales. Take Anna Ninety Houses, in *The Valley, the City, the Village* who is apparently on the cusp of both English and Welsh, who talks in bi-lingual torrents. She, who is in her extreme 'garrulousness', representative of a hybrid state that reveals the actual process of linguistic transference. One wonders whether she has so much to say because she has so much language at her disposal to express her state, or has so much language because she *cannot* find that point at which language and meaning fuse into a satisfying truth. The description of Anna Ninety-Houses' 'bi-lingual torrents' is an attempt to capture meaning in the act of negotiation between to languages. In a sense she is described as though she barters meaning between languages, offering words in exchange for words easing their meanings more accurately into new contexts. She is described as such, yet at no point do we really see this reproduced in the text, for she is mediated only through the voice of Trystan.

To place this observation within the context of theory, it was Derrida who infamously rejected the capacity of the written word to sustain and convey meaning in any way that could rival the oral exchange of language.[16] Derrida's claim was that between speaking people meaning can be negotiated and bartered more effectively

than the fixed printed sign alone can ever aspire to achieve, for the meaning of language is not fixed. He maintains that in this oral location, incomprehension (non-meaning) can be more directly conveyed and promptly addressed by unlimited alteration in the exchange of signs, that ensures meaning is as accurately conveyed as possible. These corrective possibilities of the oral situation thus ensure that meaning is sheltered from ambiguity and passes from one person to another with as little confusion as possible. The fixed written word is open to so many interpretations that meaning is necessarily destabilised and becomes unreliable. The exchange cannot be monitored, the words cannot be altered to suit the reader's comprehension, and thus misreading and the proliferation of unintended translations become the norm. Suddenly there is more than one meaning and a language becomes a place of contest rather than the territory of fact and truth.

In the 'Autobiography' of *Dragon has Two Tongues* it is exactly this privileging of orality that drives Jones's alternative idea of cultural exchange. The legacy of the Welsh language relies upon the oral exchange of culture within the nuclear family, at the bi-linguistic intersection (which for Jones is three generations). It is supported by the theories of Derrida which prefer the mode of oral exchange over the written word as the more accurate conveyer of meaning. In fact Jones subversively takes the orality that is so fundamental to the tenacity of the Welsh language tradition, appropriates it and uses it to justify why the Anglo-Welsh belong to the Welsh not the English. The tradition that they are somehow excluded from by virtue of the language, is returned to them by the tradition of oral communication that they are somehow also exempt from because they use the English language. When Derrida's theories are thrown into the mix, and one considers how within such an

oral environment, meaning can be so carefully and accurately exchanged, tested by immediate reaction and adjusted to fit, one wonders, how Jones's contemporary Welsh language writers could be so certain of the inaccessibility of their tongue. Suddenly the fact that so much can be lost in translation between two languages is open to question, for if these oral negotiations are taking place so intensely in so many different areas, such losses are surely minimised. Thus, speech becomes the medium through which the Welsh language and its culture is both memorialised and diversified and arguably it is this process of diversification that Jones recreates over and over again in his creative work as hybrid characters, such as Anna Ninety-Houses, switch from one language to another to ensure coherence for their listeners. That the storytellers are implicated in this process is inevitable.

The second trait of the storyteller considered by Ong, and which is manifested by Uncle Gomer, is the ability to continually digress, to tell stories within stories, and still retain the original thread,[17] like a particularly intricate form of stitching or as Trystan observes a 'bewildering webwork of ... narratives':

> His narratives proliferated. He was incapable of recounting a simple, uncomplicated story which proceeded step by step from beginning, through climax, to conclusion. (*VCV*, 59)

Here Trystan refers to a literary form ('a simple, uncomplicated story...'), which is the structural creation of the literate story-writer and is the antithesis of his uncle's orally constructed narratives.[18] It is interesting that Trystan perceives the structure as both organic (a tree) and 'magical': there is a lack of contrivance in Gomer's

creations that the small boy, and the man behind him, stands in awe of. To master oral expression and memory in such a way ('he never lost his way') is to have the absolute power of creation:

> his talk rose like some magical and glistening tree expanding into the grove before ones' eyes and heaving itself visibly bough by bough towards the heavens. (*VCV*, 60)

One cannot help but wonder how far this consciousness of the oral narrative impacted upon the structure of the novel itself. *The Valley, the City and the Village* which has much in common with the nature of Uncle Gomer's oral story-telling. The novel has a beginning, middle and an end only so far as it has three distinct sections. It is episodic rather than climactic. The fact that the novel progresses in a teleological linear fashion is perhaps deceptive, as time itself is inconsistently plotted. The last experimental section is reminiscent of Woolf, encompassing as it does the events of a single day.

That Jones is caught in the margins between opposing discourses is once again evident in the fact that in this novel the narrative can be located somewhere between the modernist revelatory stream of consciousness, the traditional written narrative and the oral dexterity of Uncle Gomer's web-work. Memory becomes the location for conflicting dynamics as it is used as a creative narrative device as much as it is a vessel for traditional historical narrative. The process of memory upsets, as much as it provides a form for, the structure of the novel.[19] 'Remembering' the primary purpose of such characters as the *beirdd* and the *cyfarwydd* is the haunting

and guilty refrain that troubles this text, and disturbs Trystan's semi-conscious states. Guilty recollections disturb the novel until memory itself becomes the obsessive focus for the hallucinatory apocalypse at the close of the novel, where Trystan's Granny judges his friends by the calibre of their cultural memory. Nico, in particular, slovenly and thoughtless, is ordered to 'remember' what he has forgotten. It is certainly pertinent that, memory, so vital a narrative tool for modernist experimentalism, should be appropriated equally experimentally by Jones to become a subtle vehicle for cultural emancipation and national resurgence. The memory of the storyteller and the memory of a nation is urgently exposed and explored via the very narrative devices that were created to accommodate the impact the act of 'remembering' has upon the structuring of 'reality' and identity.

It is not considered to be Jones's best novel – *The Island of Apples* is his more coherent artistic creation – however, whether *The Valley, the City, the Village* novel is structurally flawed or a deliberate combination of two opposing narrative forms is an interesting question. One could consider *The Valley, the City, the Village* to be an experimental fusion of oral storytelling and experimental printed narrative structures. How far the plot retains a teleological integrity, rather than being merely revelatory is a moot point. Trystan certainly moves towards an improved self-realization, but the progression is neither ordered nor resolved except by time. One wonders whether in fact there is an individual revelation that is being charted, or whether Trystan's psyche is merely the subservient location for the claims of a nation that is internally disengaged. Individual revelations, such as Ursula's traumatic rebirth into experience (in *The Rainbow*) are, alone, insufficient responses for 'Anglo-Welsh' writers such as Jones. That process can only be meaningful if it is answering the needs of his culture.

Thus, the visionary apocalypse that closes Trystan's days in Llansant is motivated by cultural desires and not those of the isolated individual. Sins and redemption are cast into the context of the nation, and God is Wales as much as he is an omnipotent deity. Individual 'stories' are held to account, and meaningful only if they are seen to be responsive and memorialize the wider web-work of the nation. The pure process of individuality and 'self', the kind made popular by Modernism, is antagonistic to the idea of the nation unless governed by it. Trystan's emergence is into Wales not merely into his new 'self'. He is made 'whole by Wales' in a way Gwydion cannot be. ('Why does he not give himself unreservedly to his love of Wales? Why is he not made whole by her?' [*VCV, 299*]). Nico is also sentenced to being 'made whole by' Wales in the final page: 'You shall know the history of your race. You shall learn concerning your ancestors....' In his waking dreams Trystan proves himself a *cyfarwydd* worthy of a 'new' Welsh pulpit.

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I have referred only to a few of Jones's storytellers: the fact is that his work is peopled by a plethora of them. There are so many other variations of the c*yfarwydd* figure in his work that one could argue that he is making it his particular business, whilst constructing a story of his 'Wales', to reveal the many, disparate and yet related, registers that authenticate the larger national narrative. Uncle Hughie, the strike leaders, Benja Bowen, Anna Ninety-Houses, all project different voices of varying influence that prove Gwyn Thomas's comment that they are a:

'Damned garrulous lot, you know these Welsh. Just haven't given the lingo chance to lie decently down and die...Gentlemen I give you the restless, wagging tongue of the Cymry'.[20]

Not surprisingly, then Mair Anne, the girl Trystan meets on Llansant farm, is 'a wonderful describer of what she had witnessed, she made things vivid by the details she told you' (*VCV*, 74). Like Uncle Gomer she has a variety of registers, can recount serious or humorous tales, and also has the dramatic ability to perform the tale to an audience ('she mimicked and acted and made us laugh' [*VCV*, 74]). This particular form of tale telling is presented as specific to the rural community and Trystan, a Valley child conditioned to a different, sharper, savvier, more combative form of oral narrative where each person is both teller and listener, is cast firmly in the role of listener. Trystan exchanges short pithy rhymes with his Ystrad friends that are more akin to the *Hen Benillion*:

In the Upper Ystrad Valley
Sticks and stones are very handy;
If you run about or shout
You're sure to have a heavy clout
Off the Bobby. (*VCV*, 22)

All sing quatrains of a similar type, answering each other in a traditionally combative fashion.[21] Of the children, Trystan recalls 'There was no-one in Llansant, certainly, like Benja Bowen. The village children were quieter, they played different games, and they smelt differently' (*VCV*, 67-8). The differences between Benja, a story-teller

born and bred in the anglicised industrial valley, and Uncle Gomer, a story-teller *par excellence* of a rural West Wales Welsh speaking village, are stark but the deeper, fundamental veins of heredity are beyond such observations.

Trystan's Uncle Hughie, a winder in the mines, is also a story-teller, from the anglicised valley, but he is an example of the way in which the *cyfarwydd* evolved to survive the social changes instigated by industrialisation. He is a manifestation of Gwyn Thomas's Valley orality, the canny frontiersman, preferring 'minute jokes' to 'tease people, playing affectionate tricks upon them' and to 'gently mimic their behaviour' (*VCV*, 48). He embodies the dry sardonic wit of the working collier, always desiring the upper hand, always having an answer, and is inclined toward shorter comic dialogues, that leave the recipient without response. This kind of oral narrative – so different from that of Uncle Gomer – has more to do with immediate survival than with the reiteration of vital, yet distant, histories. The story and the storyteller has evolved in the Valleys to be a matter for contest, rebellion and victory. His role is often to be subversive and mostly irreverent. Uncle Hughie's sense of irony is characteristically employed in his baiting of the newly married woman in Rosser's Row with a pocket full of change ('That was the last time the young wife tried to establish her social supremacy' [*VCV*, 46]). It is this verbal and dramatic quickness that marks him as notably different to Uncle Gomer's prevarications and verbal meanderings. Each Uncle represents two, mostly distinct dimensions of Welsh orality, rural and industrial, both indebted to the tradition of Welsh oral narrative, but both developed tangentially according to the different social experiences of their respective, vastly contrasting localities.

One particularly sturdy manifestation of the *cyfarwydd* that is recurrent in Jones's fiction, and is especially prevalent and relevant to the Anglo-Welsh voice fighting for survival on the margins of Wales is the teller of tall tales. An archetype that manifests itself in most cultures, and indeed is akin to Jung's seminal trickster,[22] the teller of tall tales has a significant position in Wales as the skewer of truth and the transgressor of acceptable boundaries. Always a charmer, always seductive, this anarchistic purveyor of words is especially and complexly attractive to Jones, whether he is celebrating the dexterous imagination of the figure or morally castigating his untruths.

It is the conflicting ideas that exist between fiction and truth in Jones 'Valley' and 'City' that are the particular focus of this section. It seems that for Jones the teller of tall tales is located at that very point where truth and fiction ambiguously overlap, and it is this location that is particularly pertinent for cultures where 'truth' is contested by so many different 'authorities'. The tall-tale challenges these authorities and their truths in a comic yet profoundly unsettling way, and in *The Valley, the City, the Village* this occurs through Trytsan's relationship with the overbearing influences of his anglicised education and the moral truths of the chapel culture that suppress and confound so many of the 'fictions' he is instinctively drawn to.

In chapter three of *The Valley, the City, the Village,* Trystan is asked to read his homework aloud in class, and in spite of successfully preparing his translation the night before, he becomes confused in the moment and forgets what he knew so well. When accused of failing to complete his work, Trystan cries out at the unjust accusation only to be greeted with the following imperious reply:

'I'm afraid, my boy, you don't keep strictly to the truth'. (*VCV*, 38)

Thus, Trystan is publicly denounced as a liar despite knowing himself to be telling the truth. He cannot account for his momentary forgetfulness, but does failing to *remember* make him false? This 'torturing thought', this 'agonising consideration', hounds Trystan into the hills. The kind of self-questioning it provokes, and the need for solitude to examine it, seems an exaggerated response to the reprimand. Forgetting what should be known and being considered morally lacking in consequence is torment for Trystan. When he realises that he did not lie but was still considered by his teacher to be a liar, he refers to a 'momentary blankness as though my reason had been completely wiped out' (*VCV*, 39). Trystan and his teacher both claim access to the truth. The small void of 'reason', of meaning, which the conflict of these two opposing stances creates in the mind of Trystan presents a strange space of nothingness and of newness which is as yet too overpowering for him to acknowledge, let alone utilise. Between these two opposing 'truths' lies an area of non-meaning in which something alternative and new could emerge. Until that space is claimed, the stake remains contested: whose 'truth' is more worthy, whose 'truth' is mightier? Truth means something different in the public political world than it does in the private moral world of Trystan's home. It is certainly not universally the same. For Trystan on confronting this paradox, it is easier to lapse into 'anguish and despair', to suffer the 'confusion' of two truths than to step out into a pristine moment in which two equally valid opinions can declare each other meaningless. There is certainly more than two individuals at stake here, more than a teacher's autonomy over his pupil. Two cultures are exposed in conflict, one powerful, able to assert a

truth that is questionable over another who knows itself to be right. There is certainly more on the line than a pubescent boy steeped in a simple faith questioning his own integrity.

The teacher and Welsh grammar school pupil – these are shown to be actors in an arena in which so much that was imperial and oppressively colonial was played out in Wales. The oppression of Trystan is akin to that of an entire culture. The language Trystan revises yet fails on the spot to translate is French, but the language that closes the chapter and yet whose silence in that Grammar school could be considered the biggest lie of all, is Welsh. It is also the language the knowledge of which so many Welshmen took for granted until they were put on the spot and their memory lapses were exposed. So the lie that Jones refracts through his character's dilemma, and the real fear, is not that of the lesson but that of a life spent diverging from a mother tongue. If Trystan (and Jones) fails to express his culture in his native tongue, is that not the biggest lie of all? Doesn't that leave him telling stories as tall as any of those attributable to his wayward friend Benja? (For earlier in the same chapter Trystan condemns his friend for fabricating and embellishing the truth: he describes him as 'the big fool – the bigger liar.' Is conducting a life in English the tallest story of all? Is this the deviation from the truth that is most guilty of falsehood? Stories, histories, truths and lies, what is real and ideal, and who is real and ideal: All are at stake in this novel that anatomises the Welsh nation through the experiences of one boy emerging unconfidently and uncertainly into an adulthood that is culturally uncharted.

At home, away from the demands of his school life, chapter four finds Trystan's ability to remember unimpaired. Countering his earlier scholarly failure, he may not recall the texts he translated the night before, but he recollects the more distant past in detail. 'Anna Ninety Houses' and her gushing prose stimulates the narrator into his own labyrinth of remembrance:

> I remembered watching through the keyhole taciturn and
> weary-handed Watkins the milk, receiving and returning
> milk jug after milk jug accepting all with invariable pleasethankyous;
> I saw Sam the baker with the wheatsheaf emblems of cooperation
> painted on his bread cart shouting: 'Get up, Kronje, get up, Kronjooter'
> and galloping his rawboned and eccentric carthorse at a clatter over
> the level crossing; and on our hearthrug I remembered cadaverous
> Ted the Celtic...(VCV, 56)

Here the 'true' role of memory can be seen unfolding Trystan's history and community like a long parade of people and impressions. For what is recalled easily is not the foreign language required by his educators, but his experiences and his observations, the culture he lives in and the people he has seen. In the dynamic between Anna Ninety Houses and Trystan one can see how a culture retains its integrity via oral narratives. Whether a story, a sentence or, like Anna Ninety Houses, a surge, wordiness acts as stimulant to Trystan's own reminiscence, and one can see how retaining a vocal narrative can preserve memory and culture in the face of external and destructive pressures. Trystan may not recall the particularities of language, but he does *remember* the nuances and habits of people. He recalls the

personal, the emotional bonds provoke memory. Like a *cyfarwydd* he simply recalls the folk of his community.

For Jones, the writer with socialist sympathies, these local characters, and their lives, so often overlooked, must always take precedence over Nationalist ideals that can detract from the suffering of the Welsh workers. Translate this into the cultural climate of the 1950s and compare it with *The Dragon has Two Tongues.* Ten years later, and the blueprint for Jones's 'Autobiography' can be discerned in his focus upon shared cultural experience and remembering, rather then the particularities of language, as bearer of national identity. Memory is not resident within the way words are shaped but in the legacies of what we experience and for Jones this latter transcends the linguistic borders of Wales. If culture cannot exceed language divides, then Jones, like E. M. Forster before him, claims here that humanity can, even if it does create a wonderfully understated 'muddle' of the nation.

If Welsh culture does cross the linguistic divides as Jones suggests, then it is the storyteller, the *ystoriwr,* the gossip, the tellers of minute jokes, and tall tales, the *cyfarwydd* who is at the frontier, who is building bridges and finding safe ways through the wilderness between two worlds. The *bardd* is a figure too enmeshed in the historical complexities of his craft and his language to have the versatility demanded by the vagaries and plurality of a culture constantly in flux. He becomes, in the English language, a monumental rather than a living figure. The *cyfarwydd,* as his many guises reveal, is Jones's true shape shifter.

Trystan remembers, and it is Anna Ninety Houses who has provoked him with her 'boiling deluge of English and Welsh'; her 'spectacular floods and thaw waters'; her 'lawless torrents of reminiscence'; her 'deluge' of language and speech that 'drowns the universe' (*VCV*, 53). Imagine a speech that drowned the universe, and an ark of listeners preparing to inherit what lies beneath the flood. The resilience of the oral traditions and tendencies towards 'garrulousness'[23] in Wales draws even the most impassive into the process of 'remembering' a culture that Jones presents as fiercely resilient and tenacious. The sheer velocity, breadth, and chaos of meaning that finds expression in both the Welsh and the English language is testament to this overwhelming cultural flood of recollection that cannot even be contained by the two sign systems it has. The metaphor of speech as tempestuous ocean, as reckless wave and overwhelming tide, is itself a borrowing from the Welsh language and it is one which Jones uses frequently in his work. That such tempestuous water will always find its true course, and negotiate a path through any obstructions, says much about the culture it carries in its currents.

There is clearly a cultural precipice that has been stumbled upon by Trystan and Jones's generation. They have lived through a period of change and adaptation that has left the individual floundering, anxious and uncertain until an uncomfortable peace has been made with the complexity of the immediate past. The chasm that seems to open between Trystan and his Granny is not adequately bridged by Uncle Hughie, or Uncle Gomer and what Llansant stands for. Trystan himself is incapable of uniting his conflicting experiences. The hallucinatory dream of judgement that closes the novel proves that the chasms are only beginning to be bridged. It is enough that the distances have been accepted. Traversing them is suggested to be beyond the

novel and beyond the understanding of the text as it ends. Truth, the truth of Wales, of the valley, the city and the village, has not been achieved in this text, perhaps cannot be achieved by any text. Jones desires a truth that the post-modern Wales can arguably never deliver. It can only lie in the space that the Welsh language leaves in its wake. Even the liars like Benja will have some vital role to play in the reconfiguring of the nation. Like Peter Carey's *Illywacker*, Badgery, the tricksters and the confidence men,[24] the storytellers like Benja Bowen with their pseudonyms and variant nomenclatures will unwittingly define the borders of possibility for a culture, whilst merely trying to survive on the edges of the relentless ferocity of its uncertainty and unpredictability:

> 'On a fine day' he said, when our counter songs had brought
> to an end his interminable stanzaic cycle, 'on a fine day you
> can see all the county of Glamorgan from by here, aye'. (*VCV*, 30)

By provoking a response in their listeners, by forcing them to think beyond the obvious and the rational, the teller of tall tales and 'lies' has forced, even if only in parody, listeners beyond their own conception of what is true, into the realms of fantasy and it is there that the feasible can be shifted. It is there that the truth can be thoroughly contested and in a nation dominated by the overwhelming presence of an alien culture it is a 'there' that is not only desired but necessary. When Trystan and Evan contribute to and even parody Benja's exaggerations, it is not that they have put their friend's wayward Welsh voice in its place that is important, it is the fact that they have geographically, physically and imaginatively reclaimed their Wales from the teacher who accused Trystan of being a liar because he was uncertain of himself

and failed to remember what he already knew, that is crucial. Benja is merely a device here for a double bluff. For although the retorts are made in jest, there is a claim being staked that has been hinted at from the beginning of the chapter and the clown is vital to the victory. It is a territorial claim, one of landscape, of possession, and one which only self-mockery can achieve because it is such parody that reveals an easy knowledge worthy of tenure and truth:

> 'And all Monmouthshire,' I said, 'you can see the fairies dancing on Twyn Barlwm.'
> 'And all Carmarthenshire,' said Evan. 'You can smell the laver bread in Carmarthen market' (*VCV*, 30)

Buried deep within this 'fluent collaboration' is also, and probably more vitally, a reprimand to the Welsh language advocates that truth does not necessarily reside within the ability to 'remember' a culture through a specific language:

> Benja did things so that he could describe them to you afterwards. He had the faculty of describing many things which he had not done also. (*VCV*, 33)

Here is the embryo of a cultural story-teller that is not historical, not governed by established fact or memory. This is an anomaly, a break with tradition, of the *cyfarwydd,* the chapel and with truth, that seduces Trystan, and yet he finds difficult to countenance at the same time. Benja's stories aggravate Trystan because he recognises the self-seeking in his extravagance and exaggeration. 'I remembered his endless lies to me, to Evan, to the masters, to his parents. And yet I always wanted

his company' (VCV, 32). Despite this he accepts Benja and his stories, for the need for such 'lies' such self-seeking exaggerations of truth are somehow prerequisites of a cultural identity struggling to define itself against histories that do not contain them.

Thus, truth telling and fantastic storytelling, tall stories in which the truth becomes deformed for the sake of effect on the audience, are juxtaposed in this third chapter of this novel. The opposition reflects the hostility of Welsh Non-conformity toward any embellishment of the austerely bare truth; its inability to conceive that there may be forms of truth discernible only through the 'false distortions' of fiction. History and literature are thus strange bedfellows in the tenets of the chapel, and the storytelling traditions of Wales become necessarily suspect as a consequence. Equally, once the stories and the storytelling traditions of Wales become implicated with such godlessness, so does the history and culture it relates.

The audience must remain enthralled for the storyteller to fulfil his role as bearer of memory. To limit him to a factual and spartan truth can only alienate the audience he requires to fulfil his purpose i.e. finish his tale. An oral story teller never tells a tale the same way twice. Does that make him a liar? And if so which tale was the truth by which we measure his lies? What is truth and what is a lie? These questions are implicitly posed when Jones considers the various forms and registers of Welsh orality in *The Valley the City, the Village*. Why are some forms of verbosity and tendencies toward telling tales permitted, and others condemned. Why is the truth so vital to Trystan? And which truth is his own?

Uncle Hughie flirts with the truth, his tale telling is teasing, superficial and minor, and yet in walking out with Aunt Tilda and deliberately not explaining their relationship clearly, he has still given Anna Ninety Houses the wrong impression, planted the seed of a story in her observing mind. A slight shift towards ambiguity provokes imagination and fabrication. Is it a lie to permit such a swerve from the truth for the sake of humour? Is it not what we say, but what we mean? Is it where our intentions and our motivations lie that holds us to account rather than where we lie ourselves. Where do we lie in relation to the truth? The non-conformist chapel of which Uncle Hughie is such a committed member would surely be quite clear on the moral certitudes of truth – hence its hatred of all fictions. And yet here is a committed and active 'chapelite' playing with and scuffing the very edges of truth that the dogmatic Welsh religion worked so hard to firmly delineate. Uncle Hughie, however unintentionally, has strayed into the domain of fiction the very moment he allows his position to be misinterpreted by another. Whether this is a lie should be a matter for ethics, but in South Wales it becomes a significant symptom of the condition of a culture.

There is no such moral or cultural dilemma that impinges upon Uncle Gomer's story telling. Aunt Rosa's disapproval is at its most cultural and snobbish as she perceives his rattling to be gossipy and beneath him. It is inconvenient for her as it annoys her own pretensions and affects his efficiency around the house. At the very least he is considered boring and verbose. At no point do the demands of truth intercede as violently and relentlessly as they do in Trystan's fiercely religious valley home. There seems to be a smaller cost in Llansant for story telling than

there is elsewhere. Uncle Gomer's memory is fertile and allowed to unfold, contested only by the restraints of time and Rosa. Unlike the valleys, this rural Welsh idyll does not find itself so pressured to locate the truth and abandon all that is false, and therefore is not such a moral conundrum for Trystan. That Trystan is expected to be a minister by his puritanical Granny casts Trystan into the City unable to narrate his own life, and it is a period in which he essentially lives a story that is not his own: in effect a lie. Just as there are consequences for Dewi's appropriation of Karl's story at the expense of his own in *The Island of Apples*, in this earlier novel Trystan lives the meaninglessness of a story that he has no attachment to.

The tall tale in Wales is most recently represented by the character Nessa in the television comedy series 'Gavin and Stacey'. Her experiences are mostly mundane, and yet are littered by anecdotal references to the worldly experiences she has had, famous people she has met, had affairs with and worked with. These tales totally unsettle our perception of her character and identity; this is what is interesting about the role of the 'Tall Tale' in Welsh culture. Despite their ridiculousness and the provocation of an instinctive disbelief, the fact that they inspire incredulity in the listener is sufficient alone to force a reassessment of an individual we may have forced into a stereotype and overlooked. That stereotypes need such readdressing is still relevant in Wales. It is the ease with which Nessa inserts her tales into her everyday conversation that creates the element of doubt in the listener, and interestingly it is not an element of doubt that she may not be telling the truth, but that she may actually despite all sense and rationality *be* telling the truth, that is the

unsettling factor. I refer to this example of telling 'tall tales', because it reveals the exact dramatic dynamic, one that is hinged upon the confidence of the teller enforcing a reluctant yet insistent uncertainty in the listener, that is exemplified so frequently in Jones's work, and has a fierce cultural relevance. The tale tall disturbs an obvious truth to such an extent that we are forced to profoundly question the foundations of what we think we know about the other person and about ourselves. Forcing an outsider to re-examine his interpretation of your identity is a vital tool for a nation that is subversively refusing to accept dominant ideologies. It is in the space between the confident certainty of the teller and the uncertain scepticism of the listener that truth and fiction wrestle: and it is the truth of a nation as much as the individual that is at stake.

The tall tale in Wales evokes every original power that stories always had to define and reinvent cultures and identities, by extending the boundaries not of what is real but of what is and could be possible. The tall tale is thus a vital literary and oral tool of trickery for young uncertain nations and cultures attempting to survive, to assert themselves, allowing the underdog to become larger than life. Culturally stories become the means of defending and claiming contested and dangerous territories. Just as the tradition of early Praise poetry created terrifying and unconquerable heroes from princes that are almost become monsters, the tall tale creates giants from mice. It takes the ordinary and makes it extraordinary. It diverts the eye from the more obvious and mundane truth and creates a valid space for more fantastical possibilities to inhabit. It is when the tale-teller fails, like Charles Badgery in Peter Carey's novel *Illywacker* that words become jailors, houses become cages, and nation becomes a

menagerie of disparate parts. The teller of tales, especially tall tales, is thus, paradoxically, a liberator of the truth and trader of possibility.

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One such trader of possibility is of course the mysterious and enigmatic Karl whose tales transgress the boundaries of Dewi's world and call in question everything he holds true. Ultimately these stories create of him, the teller of the tallest tale. Karl enables Dewi to challenge the validity of every authority and truth in Ystrad and (as for Ursula in *The Rainbow*[25]) it is this process rather than the apocalyptic outcome that is of value.

By the 1960s it was possible for the reader to meet a novel set in the south Wales coal fields with certain expectations. There was a 'type' of 'Anglo-Welsh socio-industrial novel that was sufficiently established to offer a model, which could be mistaken for historical record. So entrenched in the history of the times and so dedicated to a realist representation of the area and the people was this model that it could be seen to engender stereotypes and apparent 'truths'. Jones himself flirts with this 'model' in the 'Valley' section of his earlier novel *The Valley the City, the Village*. Honest, hardworking, fiercely non-conformist, inherently political and anti-capitalist would be the shorthand description of these communities struggling with poverty, social change and the memories of another language, another Welsh world they once inhabited but somehow lost. This is the model that is expected in a novel set in Merthyr Tydfil, but this is not the novel that Jones has written. His novel confounds all of these attempts to anchor identity to history through fiction. For

example, *Cwmardy*, Lewis Jones's Welsh saga,[26] utilises the memories of a growing child as narrative of the community he resides in. Glyn Jones's uses that child's perspective also (it is fitting that a young culture should be told by a child) but community is irrelevant in his exploration of how such a narrative perspective can be so profoundly unreliable. Whether Jones consciously questions this genre or celebrates its resilience by utterly sidestepping its system is interesting.

Dewi Davies the narrator, and *cyfarwydd,* of *The Island of Apples* confounds this historical model by eliminating the influence of the 'father', literally and metaphorically, early in the novel. Dewi's rejection of the stories he has been told, or could tell himself, is evident in how he represents Ystrad as unglamorous and stagnant. He is not capable of imaginatively reinvigorating his environment, cannot cast his home in the kind of light Jones created for Merthyr Tydfil. This interestingly counters the continuity that Jones considers, quite contemporaneously, in his autobiography in *The Dragon has Two Tongues*. The familial history is rejected for that of an exotic outsider, his stories are taken in exchange for the more mundane epistles of his home, and the town is no cultural hub but is barren. The first chapters of the novel reveal a physically, spiritually, industrially and morally impoverished reality in which the mothers and fathers are exposed as ailing, old, debauched and ineffective. The entrance of Karl with his alternative and exotic histories and stories represents for Dewi a more attractive identity than the one he has himself inherited, so he obscures the latter for the all the joys of the former. Dewi refuses to acknowledge any kind of local history for Karl. He refuses to situate him into any kind of historical framework, and demands that he be 'other', outside any local

'remembering'. When his Granny attempts to elaborate and tell Karl's less exotic past and reveal his family history, Dewi dismisses and silences such knowledge:

> a lot of boring stuff going back four or five generations to about the time of the Romans if she was in the mood (*IA,* 138)

He resists stories that make 'everything sound so ordinary and common and *ystrydebol'* (*IA,* 137), and thus rejects the traditional Welsh *cyfarwydd* for a form of storytelling that is Romantic, more exotic and delusionary. This should be read as metaphor for the denial of history, as it becomes embroiled in the kind of fiction that can only confound reality and identity. Dewi consciously divorces himself from his own communal and personal history through his relationship with, and embellishment of Karl, and thus obscures any sense of 'reality'. It is little wonder then, that the resulting narrative is confused, uncertain and certainly not founded in any reliable or recognisably consistent actuality. It is vitally significant for the fragile Welsh context that identity can be so undermined by the failure to allow historical truth to be guide. Dewi sacrifices reality for the embellished world he constructs around Karl and this seems to be initially empowered by the icon he creates from the jewelled knife. Karl and this knife become the only truth that Dewi will allow, and it is certainly plausible that the knife can be read as one of Jung's sacrificial knives. The possibility that the object 'gifted' by Karl at the start of the novel returns at the end to claim its revenge is interesting. The stories that Dewi abandons for the glamour of the gothic romances that Karl trades are mundane but the stuff of a reality he refuses to acknowledge. In effect, they are the parts of himself that he willingly suppresses and sacrifices (his parents' deaths being an instance of this) for his idea of what should be real, Karl.[27]

The chance that Dewi has sacrificed something essential of himself that will return with knives to sacrifice him is an interesting one. How far can you suppress your history before it becomes the shadow that haunts the shadow you have become?

After the death of Dewi's parents, he and Karl live in the Powells' attic like shadows. They appear exiles on the very margins of the community they are part of. In a Bhabhian sense they are liminal – and choose to be – and in a Kristevan[28] sense Dewi through his representation of Karl is exposed as a 'stranger to himself' projecting his own otherness onto his strange friend. When all the tools of historical and social continuity, the memories of the past are discarded and exchanged for the 'new', we are necessarily balancing, as Karl seems so frequently to be literally, on the very edges of air, and narrative itself seems groundless when the familiar narrative 'truths' are rejected. This is a novel of edges and sheer drops, of falls and precarious positions –the kind, perhaps, that are exposed when the familiar is exchanged for the strangeness it had before history and the *Cyfarwydd* defined and contained it. The *Cyfarwydd* as he is recognised in the character of Uncle Gomer is defunct, in fact actively silenced in this disturbing post-modern novel. It is certainly interesting that the 'collectors' of the novel are derided, those that desire to preserve are ridiculous, be it butterflies (Growler) or clocks (Mr. Urquart, Jeffy's father collects 'time' whilst his wife cavorts with the lodger).

When Dewi opens his narrative with the following words:

> The first time I ever saw Karl Anthony he was
> floating down past our house in the river. (*IA*, 7)

he may as well be saying 'I'm telling you stories. Trust me' with the narrator of Jeanette Winterson's *The Passion,*[29] because this sentence immediately highlights that there will be some kind of vital conflict between reality and fantasy in the subsequent pages. It also suggests that truth and lies will become impossibly embroiled in the process. What it does not belie, and where it parts company with Winterson's novel, is the anxiety that will ultimately erupt when 'trust' in the 'story' is overcome. Dewi's relationship with and representation of his life in Ystrad utterly confounds the *cyfarwydd* that Jones pays homage to in his earlier novel and many of his short stories. The proliferating web-work of Uncle Gomer's narrative – always skilfully navigated by his oral storytelling skills, become for Dewi a tangled-web in which 'truth' becomes utterly suspect and Dewi, unlike the ideal *cyfarwydd,* becomes unreliable and certainly not the steady voice of local history. Dewi, unlike Gomer, is no 'local skald and druid', although his tone and style may yet suggest that he aspires to be such. In his creation of Dewi, Jones seems to upset more than the 'concept of history' generated by and associated with local Welsh communities. By avoiding the real presence of the heavy industrial landscape that would still, in the 1960s be present, the social and geographical landscape becomes silenced –although by the 1960s it would have begun its strange and slow decline – he also challenges the genre of novels that thirty years earlier wrote the valleys into Welsh history and did much to establish the emergent 'Anglo-Welsh' voice. Therefore it is not only the traditional *cyfarwydd* who is silenced by this strange text, but the process of 'history-making' and 'storytelling' that occurred in the thirty years before.

The awful plaintive cry which closes the novel, ('Karl, Karl!'), as Dewi loses his 'new world' to the old familiar one in a flood, which is symbolic for its inversion of the bible, (and indeed D.H.Lawrence's own iconic rewriting of Genesis in *The Rainbow*), offers an important and implicit verdict upon the role of the *cyfarwydd* and such storytelling. Dewi's voice lapses from authority and becomes that of a child venting an agonised sleeping cry as a dream threatens to tear his psyche from its known rhythms. Dewi has lost not only the friend but also the new voice he has created from him. That Dewi has become prisoner to the 'proliferating' web work of narrative that a *cyfarwydd* such as Uncle Gomer would navigate with more skill, is significant. As reality closes in upon the tragic escapee, one is recalled by Jones's own fictional 'webwork' to one of his first stories 'I was born in the Ystrad Valley' in which the communist Wyn, escaping from a more 'real' and bloody revolution than that which Dewi has narrated, cannot leave the Valleys he is so profoundly implicated by that he has 'no meaning or existence apart from them' (*CS*, 38). Just as the imagination and the 'new narrative' that Dewi desires is proved an inadequate match for the stories of his family and community, in the earlier text Wyn cannot exchange one identity for another.

As you read this novel it is interesting how storytelling is implicated and used as a subtle device to shift power from character to character in the text. Jeffy is in the throes of a fireside tale when he disappears over a mountain edge and returns concussed and replaced by the new tale-teller, Karl, who takes his place at the makeshift 'hearth' in the woods and seduces them with stories from outside their locale. In the short interim, it is Growler in full moth-hunting regalia, who takes up a brief, dominant and uninvited residence at the fire. Growler displays classic Victorian

imperialism in his English tendency to colonise, collect and educate those he sees as inferior. His silencing power over the narrative is short-lived. Whoever has control over the storytelling, directs the narrative and has power over the listeners and the ability to write 'history' as truth, and claim their own interpretation, i.e their own memory of events to be dominant. The cultural 'remembering' that was the desperate, insistent even hallucinatory refrain of Trystan's final sojourn in the 'country' of his rural Welsh ancestors, becomes riddled with uncertainty and unreliability in Jones's later novel. Homage has swerved into parody as 'remembering' becomes utterly suspect and unreliable at the hands of Dewi. Community, so vital to the role and relevance of the *cyfarwydd,* is revealed in a state of early post-industrial decline in which language is become irrelevant and history superfluous and ailing.

So, on the one hand Jones's work celebrates the traditions of the *cyfarwydd* in Uncle Gomer's ability always, despite divergence, to return to the central truth, and thus models the process through which history and a coherent national 'truth' is preserved and from which identity is hewn. Then, on the other hand, in the *Island of Apples* Jones confounds this very process of truth-telling, of memory-making and the certainty of history by revealing the storyteller, the *cyfarwydd* to have, at best, a skewed view of events and at worst an utterly inconsistent and necessarily dishonest apprehension. Which is acceptable, so long as one does not look to the storytellers for anything other than fictions: once the 'story' is allied with history, and truth, it must demonstrate an integrity that is perhaps not its right to claim.

It has been suggested that this novel is an example of Welsh Magic Realism.[30] This is interesting especially if one considers that the genre often reveals two cultures

in conflict via their modes of narration (storytelling). In Magic Realism, mythology, the supernatural and the fantastic stories that characterise older cultures come into conflict with sophisticated forms of 'western' narrative theory to produce a hybrid genre that is still defining and establishing itself outside the discourse of fantasy.[31] The fact that there is little that occurs in *The Island of Apples* that cannot be rationally explained would seem to differentiate it from the most famous examples of the genre. In Jones's novel the supernatural is suggested but not tangible. A mislaid knife, the coincidences of light, gun powder, all serve to sustain a sense of the supernatural, but what is fantastical can also be explained by trickery and perception. It could be said that physical strength and self confidence are so alien to Dewi that he imaginatively (romantically) invests them with a powerful and obsessive significance that develops and culminates into a neurotic, even hysterical, crescendo. Arguably, the fantasy of this novel lies in the telling and not in the facts of what is being told. Jones does stray into the territory of Borges[32] by openly questioning the bounds of reality, but how far he actually confounds the accepted metaphysics of that reality is open to debate. It would seem that the bounds of textual reality are reaffirmed as much as they are queried. The reader is entirely in the hands of an unreliable first person narrator, Dewi. Thus, certainty is inevitably to be located in a bartering of meaning between text and sub-text and also, the fact that although Dewi may have suspended his sense of disbelief, the reader has not. Neither is he forced to do so, certainly not with the extreme rigour that is so frequently demanded by writers such as Borges and even Rushdie[33] whose fantasy requires that we shed much of what we accept to be logically true. In *The Island of Apples* the reader is aided in his exposure of 'the truth' by the naiveté of Dewi's recollections which, rather than disguising what can refute his own representation of Karl, openly includes it. All the tools to undermine Dewi's

fantastical accounts of his friend are offered quite unconsciously in the process of the narrative.

It would seem that Dewi is no conscious trickster. It is not his aim to deceive, because he himself believes what he tells. Is he therefore a liar? And what does Jones's strategy make of the reader who is manipulated (un)willingly into the position of God and balancer of the truth as he follows the evidence, unknowingly discarded by Dewi, and blatantly planted by Jones, that supposedly exposes Dewi's elaborations. Whose is the victory? Whose is the truth? And are either welcome? There is no satisfaction in seeing more than Dewi; that would be to discard the possibility of magic and enchantment. There is certainly nothing appealing in being made both complicit in and dupe to a carefully constructed narrative device. The reader would rather obscure his own knowledge and feign the innocence and idealism of Dewi than admit a truth that is so unrewarding. To accept that truth is necessarily mundane is enough to force the reader into a lie of his own, an even larger lie because Jones has ensured that he is absolutely conscious of it. But then, calling this position into question is the insertion of what seems an irrelevant little event towards the end of the novel, which suggests that Dewi could indeed be obscuring the fact that he is exactly the kind of tricky narrator I have assumed him not to be. Dewi concocts a strange and rather sinister tale for Charley who is on his way to view Mr. Raymond's model coal mine, the intricacy and realism of which Dewi admired earlier. After relating the tale of the model cottage going up in flames, which strangely and disturbingly anticipates the news of Growler's own house fire, Dewi adds:

> This was all lies. Mr. Raymond didn't have a model like that at all, nobody could, and I didn't know why I took the trouble to make it up just to say: 'Ever been had?' to Charley. (*IA*, 207)

The question resonates beyond its moment and continues to haunt the reader, as the struggle to pin this comment down seems to become harder the more it is examined. Why does Dewi have such a vivid if non-specific knowledge of the night's events without any apparent realisation of how or indeed any self-questioning why? There is no question that somewhere, the reader has been the victim of a deception, but where and whose deception it is harder to elicit. And the question why is even harder to answer. Is it that we are simply party to a delusion and allowed access to that delusion by the mind that created it, that fundamentally skews any hold on what is real? Signposts that seem to be reliable are to be found throughout the text and yet become dead ends. Truth is hinted at but is never to be found and the possibility that Magic Realism could be a valuable interpretive theory becomes distinctly possible. But that this novel is, and should be, one that falls into the cracks between discourses is more plausible.

> A basic definition of magical realism, then, sees it as a mode of narration that *naturalizes the supernatural,* that is to say, a mode in which real and fantastic, natural and supernatural, are coherently represented in a state of rigorous equivalence – neither has a greater claim to truth or referentiality.[34]

The notion that two opposing modes of narration can be 'coherently represented in a state of equivalence' is particularly interesting when translated into the cultural

counterpoint of Wales. That *The Island of Apples* could actually be implicated by this process, where 'neither' narrative strategy 'has a greater claim to truth,' is pertinent to the nature of antagonistic, and contested, truths that have been discussed here, and indeed characterise the Welsh discourse. That the idea of Wales itself could be reflected by this counter-poise is especially significant. That one form of narration can so deconstruct another speaks much of Jones's own perceptions of his nation's narrative predicament, for as much as the substance of Dewi's tale evaporates into an undefined mist, one wonders how far this incriminates the larger ideas of Wales. At the narrative heart, of course, Dewi the *cyfarwydd* is become prisoner of his own dexterity, is ensnared by his web-work, and his listeners/readers share his predicament. That the storyteller is become incoherent, and his story untranslatable, confounds his historical role.

Beginning to interrogate the text with these basic definitions in mind it is difficult to draw conclusions without the kind of examination that cannot be pursued here: one that draws the novel into theories of the post-colonial before it can possibly begin to assess the relevance of magic realism. That it could indeed be a form of Welsh Magic Realism in which the 'older' Welsh world is somehow exerting an insistent and resistant presence against the temptations and authorities of the new is possible, but at this point such a reading is repeatedly thwarted by inconsistencies that seem to confound any such logic. What is certain is that only the slightest suggestion of the supernatural seems sufficient to nudge 'reality' into a paroxysm of unsettling doubt, and the *cyfarwydd* into a labyrinth of possible truths and histories.

[1] Glyn Jones, *The Saga of Llywarch the Old: A Reconstruction with Verse Interludes* (London: Golden Cockerel Press, 1955). See also Ifor Wiliams, *The Poems of Llywarch Hen* (London: Humphrey Milford, 1933).

[2] It is no accident that Jones uses and extends the Welsh language metaphor for talking "like the pit of the sea" (a literal translation of the Welsh Idiom 'fel pwll y môr'), or that the motions of the storytellers are likened to other natural energy sources for it illuminates that organic and physical instinct to talk that is mobilised as resilient sign of welsh identity.

[3] Although aware that the *cyfarwydd*, lapsing with the princedoms, did not officially operate far beyond the medieval period, for the purposes of the argument, I intend to use the term as a label for all storytellers who have necessarily evolved from those original historical figures. As it is not the intention of this thesis to explore the role and identity of the *cyfarwydd* in specific detail, but rather to trace the resilience of the characteristics as utilised by Glyn Jones, I feel there is adequate justification for using the term as an archetypal sign, rather than one that is historically specific.

[4] John Pikoulis, 'The Wounded Bard', *The New Welsh Review* No.26 (Autumn 1994) 22-34.

[5] Ibid. 29.

[6] Glyn Jones, *A People's Poetry: Hen Benillion* (Bridgend: Seren, 1997) 19.

[7] Harri Roberts, 'A Tower of Babel: Heteroglossia, the Grotesque, and the (De)construction of Meaning in Glyn Jones's *The Valley, the City, the Village* and Niall Griffith's *Grit'*, Welsh Writing in English: A Yearbook of Critical Studies 7 (2001-2) 106-29. See particularly 113-4.

[8] Glyn Jones, *The Valley, the City, the Village* (Cardigan: Parthian 'Library of Wales', 2009).

[9] Walter J. Ong, *Orality and Literature* (London: Routledge, 1998) 41. Here he juxtaposes tradition and innovation respectively with Oral and literate cultures.

[10] 'The art of storytelling is coming to an end. Less and less frequently do we encounter people with the ability to tell a tale properly...it is as if something that seemed inalienable to us, securest among our possessions, were taken from us: the ability to exchange experiences'. (Walter Benjamin and ed. Hannah Arendt, 'The Storyteller: Reflections on the works of Nicolai Leskov', *Illuminations,* Trans. H. Zohn (London: Cape, 1970) 83-107. This must have been the fear of people like Robin Gwyndaf, who meticulously recorded hearthside tales from the Welsh rural populace last century, as the traditional habit and form of storytelling lapsed. See Robin Gwyndaf, 'The Welsh Folk Narrative: Continuity and Tradition', (Pamphlet reprinted from *Folk Life,* Vol.26 (1987-8).

[11] See Chinua Achebe, *Things Fall apart* (London: Heineman, 1962); Gabriel Garcia Marquez, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* (London: Penguin, 1998). For more contemporary instances of how the oral is utilised to reconstruct and define contested and hybrid cultures, see Toni Morrison, *Song of Solomon* (London: Vintage 1998) and Salman Rushdie, *Midnight's Children* (London: Vintage, 2010).

[12] Walter Ong, *Orality and Literacy* (London: Routledge, 2005).

[13] Ibid. 67-69.

[14] Glyn Jones, 'Bowen, Moragn, and Williams', *The Collected Stories of Glyn Jones,* ed. Tony Brown (Cardiff: UUP, 1999) 173-95.

[15] Emyr Humphreys, *The Taliesin Tradition* (Bridgend: Seren, 1989).

[16] Jonathan Culler, 'Writing and Logocentrism', *On Deconstruction* (London: Routledge& Kegan Paul, 1983) 89-110.

[17] Op. cit. 138-148.

[18] Op. cit. 138-148.

[19] See how the verbal 'torrents' of Anna Ninety houses provoke a storm of associative memories in the mind of Trystan, and how these become disparate moments of sharp recollection rather than a fluid chronicle of the past.

[20] Gwyn Thomas, *A Welsh Eye* (London: Hutchinson, 1964) 45.

[21] Such verbal combat that the children of the valleys exchange and duel with is a briefer version of the kind of contests that would occur between great *beirdd* testing their skills in *cynghanedd* against each other. More popularly, traditions such as the *Mari Llwyd* can be seen in these informal oral exchanges in which victory is vital to retaining supremacy, identity and preventing invasion by revellers.

[22] Carl Jung, *Four Archetypes* (London: Routledge, 2003).

[23] Gwyn Thomas, *The Welsh Eye* (London : Hutchinson, 1964) 45.

[24] Peter Carey, *Illywacker* (London: Faber and Faber, 1985).

[25] D.H.Lawrence, *The Rainbow* (London: Penguin, 1995).

[26] Lewis Jones, *Cymardy*, ed. Library of Wales (Cardigan: Parthian, 2006).

[27] Christ also promised that he would return with a sword, however, the potential relevance of Jung's theories for this text is profound. Suffice to say that this novel bears the imprint of unsettling dark doubling and refiguring of ancient images of justice and judgement that implicate ancient archetypes

associated with tarot and other non-christian pagan traditions. One could read Dewi's own strangely embellished knife as a sword of justice that separates the ideal world from the real. Jones would, of course, have accessed these traditions indirectly via the symbolism of Welsh and Arthurian mythology (see Belinda Humphrey's introduction to the novel [*IA,* vii-xxi]). It may even be interesting to consider Pullman's 'The Subtle Knife' in comparison with Jones's earlier novel that is also so frequently considered Children's literature. That Jung's theory is an inversion of the biblical original is probable, and suggests a dark doubling that is also inherently present in the Arthurian romances to which this story owes a considerable and, as yet fully unexplored, debt. The sword of Arthur, like Dewi's knife, is an ambiguous gift.

[28] Julia Kristeva, *Strangers to Ourselves,* Trans. Leon. S. Roudiez (New York, Columbia University Press, 1991).

[29] Jeanette Winterson, *The Passion* (London: Vintage, 2001)5, 13...160.

[30]John Pikoulis, 'The Wounded Bard', *New Welsh Review* No.26. (Autumn 1994) 22-34.

[31]L. P. Zamora and W.B. Faris, *Magic Realism Theory, History, Community* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 1995).

[32]Jorge Louise Borges, *Fictions* (London: Penguin, 2000).

[33]Salman Rushdie, *Midnights Children* (London: Vintage, 1994).

[34]Christopher Warnes, 'Naturalizing the supernatural: faith, Irreverence and Magic Realism', Literature Compass 2 (2005) 20C 106, 1–16, 2. http://www.blackwellpublishing.com/pdf/compass/LICO_106.pdf 4/3/2010, 13.34pm.

'Come down, young mountain dreamer, to the crowded public square':[1] Orality, the *Hen Benillion* and the Guilty Locations of Glyn Jones

> I will do no more than mention one question that exercised me a great deal at this time. It was whether I had any right, in the condition of Wales and of the whole world, to devote any time to writing at all. (*DTT*, 29)

> A man of words and not of deeds
> Is like a garden full of weeds[2]

I turn immediately to Tony Conran to define the specifically Welsh stanzas that are the primary concern of this final chapter. He writes 'For the most part they are isolated quatrains, each a poem complete in itself', that 'they are not folk songs', and rather are to be seen as the remnants of the ancient (arguably pagan) tradition of battling 'poetic competitions' that were set to the strings of a harp'.[3] He writes this as he reviews Jones's book of translations *A People's Poetry: Hen Benillion* in 1998. In *The Dragon has Two Tongues* Jones refers to the publication 'in 1932' of 'a series of Welsh paperbacks'. Included in the subsequent list alongside the *Cywyddwyr,* Dafydd ap Gwilym and the Mabinogion is a 'marvellous collection of folk poetry' (*DTT,* 35). It is clear that he began attempting translations not long after ('He started in the thirties, apparently, and was still tinkering with these translations shortly before his death in 1995'.[4] Conran criticises Jones for his misreading of the Welsh 'folk symbolism' and then claims that you cannot 'always rely on Glyn Jones to get the point'. I cannot

possibly comment, being a non-Welsh speaker, and presume that if scholarly accuracy is paramount, then Jones's text is probably not the place to begin. However, this chapter fortunately seeks to celebrate and interrogate this 'not getting the point' as it reads Jones's dialogue with the *Hen Benillion* as yet another instance of the Welsh Language tradition being a profoundly welcome and interfering shadow that rouses Glyn Jones into the creation of a distinctly individual modern 'Anglo-Welsh' voice.

It is widely acknowledged that factors such as the *cywyddwyr*, his complex location at the intersection of two 'languages jostling for space'[5] and his friendship with Dylan Thomas[6] have been catalysts for Jones's startling innovation and distinctly Welsh Modernisms. Recently the more distant European lenses of Surrealism and Symbolism have been explored and definitively positioned as filters for Jones's Modernism.[7] I would like to posit another facet to this multifarious prism of influence and confluence in this examination of the *Hen Benillion.* Reading these fragmented folk verses of half-forgotten word battles and fiercely defended competitive responses, it seems that they exist 'question-less' in a kind of ahistorical world that is suspended in a vast space and unevenly measured time. Without their context, these stanzas are startlingly vivid glimpses of a partially seen world that has none of the typical and comforting markers of reality. Thus, already pregnant with relative possibility, it is not difficult to see how easily and expectantly this could be rearranged by Jones not only into a language of Welsh Modernism, but one that also answers the demands of the location of his emergent 'Anglo-Welsh voice. This 'world' is familiar and strange, so temporally skewed that the stanzas seem to become individual images captured in the curves of beautiful bubbles floating together, yet

freely in an expansive space. I propose that aesthetically, it is this that Jones finds as impossibly alluring, as the exercising of his other contrary, yet equally as insistent, urge to be a form of *bardd gwlad* integral to and integrated in his community. There is always more than one Glyn Jones in the margins of his texts and, whilst examining in more depth Conran's pertinent question, 'Why did he persist so long?', this discourse will again address the ideal double-self (*bardd gwlad*) that Jones constantly struggles with and that M. Wynn Thomas (in another context) describes as 'cultural conservationist'.[8]

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For an artist whose poetic voices are so easily tempted away from the language of the everyday world, into the realm of linguistic enchantment and Modernist innovation, Glyn Jones's lifelong preoccupation with the translation of the *Hen Benillion* is pertinently revealing. His fixation on the translation of the popular poetry of the Welsh *Gwerin* could be interpreted as a guilty means of rejecting, by rewriting, an early and influential English Romantic education, and symbolise a subsequent and reactive re-education in the literature of the Welsh tradition. At the same time, it could also be perceived as a natural extension of that Romantic education: it was of course the eighteenth-century antiquarian interest in such popular folk poetry that characterised the Romantic period. However, although both these interpretations of the origins of his fascination are feasible, in isolation neither is sufficient to explain satisfactorily why the *Hen Benillion* held Jones's attention so intensely, and so obsessively, for so long a period. Nor does it explain how it bled so readily and easily into his own English-language Modernist experimentalism. There

is more at stake for Jones in this continued dedication to these old verses than mere homage, and a guilty Romanticism. In this fixated translation of the *Hen Benillion,* the desire, and the need, to reconcile his love of Welsh language poetry and the aspiration to speak for and to his fellow valley men is latent. The voice of the aristocratic medieval *bardd* is not the voice of the people and this tension torments his love for their beautiful work. In the anonymous voices of the *Hen Benillion* he has found a means of bridging the class and the language gap that frustrates his passion for the traditions of Welsh language poetry. Jones translates theses poems or 'stanzas' with a religious fervour and a desire for accuracy that belies the significance which he attributes to them. For him these verses are the shortest crossing, not between the two abstract cultures of Wales, but between the two peoples who suffer, struggle, live, love and lose in a manner that, for Jones, blurs the significance of internal language borders. In short, engaging with the *Hen Benillion* enables Jones to assuage some of the guilt that is incurred when his love of words for words' sake entices him away from the ordinary people he finds equally as fascinating, and feels bound to represent. The title itself, 'A People's Poetry', betrays this fundamental craving to stay a mind that impulsively desires to soar.

The devotion is not easily summarized. For despite this determined engagement with the folk poetry of Wales, there is still a gulf of experience between the industrial folk of the twentieth-century mining valleys and the mostly rural voices of the *Hen Benillion.* Confounding the situation further is that instinctually Jones remains primarily attracted to the Romantic naiveté of the voices and this does not translate easily into any kind of realist representation of the working people of mid twentieth-century Wales. The *Hen Benillion* bear little immediate relationship to the

industrial communities which are strangely so infrequently rendered in Jones own poetry and prose. These fragments of Welsh popular verse are products of rural Welsh communities that arguably bear only a distant relation to the industrial and anglicised Valleys. They are the palimpsest, letters that are still discernible beneath the writing that industry has superimposed on the landscape. It is interesting that Jones's own work consciously silences that industry as often as it voices it. He is instinctually drawn beyond the immediate reality to a less complex and unsightly past, and yet on occasion, driven perhaps by guilt, he feeds deeply upon the physical mechanisation of the working world (see 'Ship' and 'Dock' [*CP, 6-7*]).

In the introduction to *A People's Poetry: Hen Benillion* Jones writes:

> Their subjects are the loves, sorrows, enjoyments, follies, jealousies, varieties, oddities, satisfactions, of an entirely rural community, of a pre-industrial era, the feasts, the fairs, the crops, the changing seasons, the creatures, the pre-Romantic joy in nature which did not appear to encompass a liking for mountains...They were not cultivated visitors from the town, poetic 'country lovers' but the people on the spot, smiths, shoemakers, cobblers. (*HB*, 15)

This extract reveals to what extent Jones is conscious of the Romantic sensibility, is antagonistic towards it, and yet ironically still guided by its fascination with 'primitive' societies. One cannot help but perceive a criticism of Romanticism as a movement which was complicit in the silencing of 'the people on the spot', whose voices were overwritten by the 'cultivated visitors' and the cultivated observers. The

attack upon the overbearing nature of the Romantic voice is ostensibly an attack on the influence of the English tradition upon and within Wales. However, there is also self-recrimination evident, as sub-textually the poet censures his own susceptibility to the influence of Romanticism; the adoption of the outsider voice, that of the cultivated visitor. That Jones implicates himself in this stance is confirmed by his own struggle with the proprietary lens of such a 'cultivated visitor' in poems like 'Cwmcelyn' (*CP,* 45). There is sufficient ground to argue that the translation of the *Hen Benillion* is, for Jones, a means of assuaging a more personal poetic and national guilt: that in such practice a disloyalty is somehow being rectified by such a preoccupation.

Despite celebrating the 'pre-industrial' innocence that the *Hen Benillion* convey (a suitably Romantic foil for the overwhelming industrial experience of the valleys) it is also true to say that these verses contain a far more compelling allure for Jones. They release the nameless voices, and disperse the broken mysteries, of history's silent majority. They represent an academically unknown and largely lost literature that has been silenced by the scorn of the establishment, one that has been marginalised and forgotten because it failed to conform to the accepted poetic standard: 'the poetry of the *beirdd*, the Welsh poets'. In this, Jones must inevitably have discerned the reflection of his own cultural and artistic predicament. The general disparagement his own early work was greeted with by the same Welsh establishment suggested the possibility of a comparable historical obscurity. His sympathy and passion for the *Hen Benillion* is therefore also an attempt to locate his own work in a Welsh tradition that had a long and characteristic history of rejecting any voices that subverted the established cultural authority of *cynghanedd.*[9] In the introduction to his

translations Jones also suggests that this free-poetry he feels such affinity with – and that contrasts so strikingly with the classical strict-metre *barddas* tradition – could well have been informed by and exposed to the less prescriptive English metric tradition at a very early stage of its development. The Act of Union (1536) increased such cultural exchanges. This merging of tradition emphasises (and culturally legitimizes) the validity of the 'dual' voice that Jones fought so profoundly for throughout the twentieth century. If the Welsh literary tradition is not an entirely fixed and unchanging phenomenon, if it is not linguistically pure, then a precedent has already been set to claim legitimacy for his own culturally contested voice.

So, for Jones, the *Hen Benillion* represent the 'voice' of a Welsh people in a way that the works of the classical *beirdd* can never do. Jones refers to the emergence of the free verse poets first recorded on paper in the sixteenth century, as 'revolutionary'. The fact that he uses this term, so embroiled in the events of the first half of the twentieth century as to be never fully able to regain a meaning free of the ideology of communism and socialism, is proof enough of the kind of analogies that are driving Jones's obsession. He recognises a highly political undertone to the critical dismissal of the *Hen Benillion.* This probably partly motivated his laborious translation of the poetry, a process which involved constantly adjusting and correcting to attain the most accurate rendition of the verse in English. It is if he hoped this process alone would somehow produce a link between the two linguistic cultures of Wales that ensured nothing was lost in translation, a connection that would validate his own bilingual and bicultural allegiances.

It is interesting and pertinent that these traditional folk verses, preserved by memory and transmitted orally, have very little of direct political import to say to the proletariat, the industrial working class whose plight, fortitude and glory Jones struggles to celebrate in his own work. Jones himself states in the introduction that 'very few ... are concerned with social criticism. If these country people did feel any resentment at their social lot, if they saw the squire, say, as their oppressor and exploiter, they did not express their feelings in their public singing gatherings' (*HB*, 17). Significantly, he goes on to observe that this silence is inevitably the result of biases in the collection and transcription of the poetry rather than in the content. What is inherited is recognised by Jones to be pregnant with potential misrepresentation and yet he still idealises its human relevance and linguistic beauty. In fact it was his success or failure to convey that beauty in the English language that determined for him whether or not a verse should be included. Aesthetically Jones is motivated by his quest for beauty, in spite of his concern also to deliver to a political agenda. These two contradictory requirements coexist uncomfortably for Jones. As a poet, he was to draw heavily on the *Hen Benillion*, and to incorporate some of their features innovatively into his own work, as will be seen below, but the massive energy he expended on their translation was not simply due to their profound relevance to the modern experience. Jones *does* utilise their styles and their freedom from any specific social, cultural or historical context to create his own highly original view of modern Wales, but he does not fulfil this through mere imitation. It is one of the paradoxes of his consuming interest in the *Hen Benillion* that it is rooted in a fascination with the anonymous, communal experience they voice, and yet culminates in the kind of highly individual poetic achievement Jones was so anxious to avoid. It is once more

proof that a Romantic individualism always claims Jones poetry when he least intends it to have sway over his words.

It is important to note that he was not drawn to the contemporary poetry of the industrial proletariat. Possibly it was too anglicised a genre, too embroiled in and contaminated by the strange public school communism of the Auden group to have any relevance for a young Welsh writer seeking a suitable language. The work of his friend Idris Davies must have touched him very profoundly as patterns can be found in the way they both juxtapose mountains with municipalities, and dreaming with action. However, Jones never more than flirts guiltily with the real issues of the working man. What this absence of the proletariat does demonstrate is exactly that aloofness from his immediate community that creates such anxiety in much of his work. Jones, even as a 'political' artist, is rarely drawn directly towards his immediate environment, which demands a commitment he can never fully accept nor provide. Instead he accesses the present only obliquely, via the past, a process which also satisfies his aesthetic sensibility and his Romantic spirit.

Whilst Idris Davies has his *Gwalia Deserta*, and *The Angry Summer*, the only instance in which Jones does confront the 'people,' and their troubled modernity, head on and begins to consider the type of revolution that is required of him, is in his early short story 'I was born in the Ystrad valley'. Here Jones attempts what he had intended in verse ('a body of workers' poetry') and was discouraged from pursuing by the more comfortably aesthetic and wordy Dylan Thomas. It is a failure, of course, as a short story. It does not achieve the form of his later more abstract works and is far too ideologically driven to ever pass muster as anything other than a quasi-

autobiographical and cultural work of interest. It is a romanticised work that is driven by the need for action and thus almost scornful of its own medium of aesthetic expression. In fact there is more of Jones's own artistic dilemma addressed in this tale than there is of the plight of the working man. Words in the 1930's were considered such inadequate, decadent weapons that poets were sometimes moved by purely ideological considerations to fight in civil wars the real causes of which they did not understand. Jones, at least, could locate his own personal history in the fight for the valleys that he explored in this story. He was also committed to use words as weapons in the cultural civil war waged between the two languages of Wales for much of the twentieth century. In a context where the overwhelmingly powerful global language of English threatened the very survival of the incomparably weaker 'native' language of Welsh, speaking and writing became politically charged in a way that writers in the monoglot English tradition could never understand. Further to complicate the situation, English had itself by the early twentieth century become unmistakeably a modern 'native', 'Welsh', language, not least because it was the language of the clear majority of the industrial working class with which Jones so deeply identified.

Given this complex bilingual and bicultural situation, it is clear that anglicised attitudes to language were clearly inappropriate when translated into the contemporary Welsh situation. In the light of this, one cannot help wondering whether that fictional fight, that violent reclamation of land and people that Jones creates in 'I was born in the Ystrad valley' may not in part be a metaphor for the attempts of the 'Anglo-Welsh' to establish their right to be considered Welsh on their own terms – a cultural struggle in which Jones was to be involved throughout his career. In other words the violent uprising in the story may be not only the

proletariat's fight against its capitalist oppressors, but also the struggle of the Anglo-Welsh for a cultural stake in modern Wales. It is therefore possible that in this story Jones is giving a subversive Anglo-Welsh twist to the preoccupation of Left-leaning English writers of the thirties with a socialist revolution.

So, despite his apparent allegiance with the workers and his distaste for the defining distance of the middle class Romantic poetic voice, Jones chooses to translate poetry with little other than a romantic relevance to those he desires to represent. And in choosing to interpret a poetry which is Romantic by association as historically representative of the twentieth-century 'people', he reveals a conflict that torments his writing. Jones creates numerous voices that struggle between the idealistic pursuit of art, and the duty owed to the community, the people. These are voices that are caught between the desire for language, its abstract beauty, its potentiality, and the surer footing (and meaning) of language that is used orally to construct a coherent self and a vital community. This struggle is one which is never satisfyingly resolved, arguably because it cannot be resolved except by ceasing to write. Writing is an isolated and isolating process. The simple act of picking up a pen removes the one individual from the many and draws attention to the self as single, singular and defining. In the short story 'Orchards',[10] Dylan Thomas's character Marlais lives within an industrial town and yet has no real relationship with it because his artistic perceptions create a visually disturbed boundary between the writing 'I' and the people he lives amongst and represents only in a passing shadowy and unreal manner. Everything outside the 'I' becomes a vague subject, owing its existence not to itself but to that which represents it. For Marlais the town becomes a toy: the 'I' is somehow claiming a possession of people and place that is not innately his to own

except through text. Speaking does not permit such distortions, as communication determines its endurance.

In Jones's work it is not merely writing that creates this divorce between an individual and the people. Painting, education, teaching, any occupation that lifts an individual out of his class and communal identity compromises the ability to fairly represent or be a part of that class which he was born into. The short story 'I was born in the Ystrad Valley' stands alone as a text in which the personal dilemma is resolved by exchanging art for action. The title itself exposes the consciousness of a divorce, and a need to reaffirm a displaced identity.[11] The protagonist Wyn does not *live* in the Ystrad Valley. Although he still defines himself by his birth place, it no longer recognises him as integral. He is the outsider, living and teaching in Cardiff. His status is one of exile, yet his cultural and social values remain those of his origins. In the opening pages much attention is paid to demonstrating how those origins function in his body like an incontrovertible structure of DNA. The physicality of memory is harder to displace and evade than mere thoughts. The link between Wyn and his people is troped in biological rather than cultural terms:

> I seem to be able to remember such early impressions not only with my mind but with the soft of my fingers, and my knees, and the delicate skin of my mouth, and even with the patient inward parts of the body which have an awareness and a sensitivity of their own although they are never touched and can see nothing. (*CS*, 1)

It is the intimacy of this description that is so striking. It is intensely private and sexual, and as such cannot ever be erased by experience. It is the unconscious sensual memory that binds Wyn to his home and that which he consciously achieves outside this organic centre can never sever that bond. On realising how an anglicised education had made him 'one of their very nicest little doctored toms' (*CS*, 5),Wyn rebels against it.

> It amused me to see what a sucker I had been. And from that time, as far as I myself was concerned, I was convinced that art is no concern of the working-class man, that directly he begins to write or paint or compose, by that very act he separates himself from his class and accepts the ideology of the middle classes, who at all times have produced the bulk of the country's poetry, music and pictures. (*CS*, 6)

These blatantly Marxist beliefs are ones that inform and torment much of Jones's work, but they are never again posed in such an uncompromising and simplistic manner. This is an early story, a product of the revolutionary thirties, and as much as the revolution is fantastical, fictional, so is, for a writer, the premise that words can so easily be exchanged for weapons. It is certainly a scenario of violent proletarian insurgency foreign to Jones's nature, and yet in the character of Wyn it could be argued that he explores his own potentiality as activist in a manner that prefigures the equally strong and uncompromising pacifism that exiled him from his profession and community during the Second World War.

It is this kind of socialist inclination that draws Jones towards the voices of the *Hen Benillion.* And yet it is far removed from the manner in which they principally inflect his own work. What Jones derives from the *Hen Benillion* is not necessarily what he first admired and sought to translate for English speaking Welsh readers. The anonymous voices that have been, if not silenced, then obscured and quietened by history are transformed in his own creative work into archetypes for his own Modernism. The historical and personal anonymity of the voices can be, and is, easily adopted and adapted by him to express the displaced and rootless condition of the individuals that populate his works. The economy of language that characterises these old verses becomes the perfect medium for Jones to encapsulate the predicaments of Welsh modernity. In their disjointed and unfinished character, the *Hen Benillion* provide him with a model for the vision of Welsh Modernity that is fully realised in Jones's early strange and mythical abstract stories.

Evidence of Jones's preoccupation with this Welsh folk poetry can already be located in early published works such as 'History' (*CP*, 56), 'Song' (*CP*, 12), and 'Marwnad' (*CP,* 5). In the latter poem, he subverts the traditional elegy by applying the term to the praise of a common miner. The form is more anglicised than Welsh, but the inner division manifest in Jones's lifelong social and cultural unease with literary poetry and Welsh-language poetry is crudely evident. His desire to represent the anonymous masses of Wales, the workers, the people that history forgets and poetry mostly silences, finds expression and guilty relief in the study of the *Hen Benillion.* The translations of these oral remnants, pieces of the unremembered, become both symptom of, and cure for, Jones's poetic anxiety. They become the pin with which Jones pricks himself to ensure that he never strays too far from the people

he feels obliged to represent. These poems are a means of reconciling his craft -- that owes as much to the classical *Beirdd* as it does to the Romanticism of the English tradition – with the muted *Gwerin* of Wales.

'Merthyr' (*CP*, 41-4) is, of course, the poem that encapsulates and gives shape to this anxiety, and the personal journey Jones takes with the *Hen Benillion* can be traced even here, when he rejects the 'posh poetic death', for a homelier burial in his Bakhtinian Merthyr, beneath the 'glare of pantomime's / Brilliancy' (*CP*, 44). That he anglicises the 'posh death' through his use of Romantic mountain imagery ('great green roof, some Brecon slope'[*CP*, 42]) is symptomatic of his own helpless hybridity. However, anglicisation also becomes the device by means of which he is able to distance himself from a Romanticism that is instinctual ('a sensational news / the heart hears, before she starts to bruise / herself against the earth's rocky rind' [*CP*, 43]). By couching his weakness for 'grandeur, style and dash' in the imagery of an alien culture he is able to distance himself from it but. By this means, he is able to deny the foreignness he perceives in himself, by projecting it onto another, external, presence. (Such a strategy arguably recurs in *The Island of Apples,* where Karl becomes the stranger whom Dewi creates in order to come to terms with his own strangeness.) Undermining the preference for the 'Merthyr-mothered breeze' is the self-conscious and self-lampooning use of theatrical imagery, which draws attention to the fact that this 'alternative death' is just as much a lie, a cathartic drama enacted to alleviate his own guilt. The natural ceremony of the first death seems darkly shadowed by the incongruous and ironic presentation of the substitute: the 'pantomime' is in 'full floods, foots and limes' (*CP*, 44) – all references to stage lighting; the next, and final, stanza refers to the 'scene, the legendary walkers and

actors of it'. In this final stanza it becomes clear that both these kinds of poetic rendering of place or landscape (*country* or *town*) are inadequate and become tarnished, dulled when set in relief against the people who have inhabited them. Landscape is only meaningful if it harbours 'memories, dense as elephants' (*CP,* 44). For Jones the *Hen Benillion* are a communal equivalent of these memories: they are the 'dead men's histories', with which he closes his supplication/prayer/poem.

Interestingly, in the first unpublished attempts at recreating folk poetry Jones tends to over narrate and overload the simplicity of the traditional songs with excessive situational and emotional detail. It is in the spare-ness of the *Hen Benillion* that their strength lies (although one could argue that such apparent economy could equally be due to the fact that they are fragmented recollections). Poems such as 'Vigil' (*CP,* 176) are clearly derived from the folk tradition but the language is too overbearing and elaborate to owe everything to this Welsh tradition. The ballad form of 'The Milk Lad' (*CP,* 181) is quite different to the rhythms and metre of 'Wife a' Lost' (*CP,* 173) which, with its syllabic mix of seven and eight per line and a typical three beats, bears the greatest resemblance to his own translations of the *Hen Benillion.* 'Interior During the Depression' (*CP,* 172) exemplifies Jones early and thwarted desire to write a body of workers' poetry, an idea he appears to have abandoned and yet that infiltrates and problematizes much of his subsequent work. Instead of such a conscious re-application of the folk traditions in his poetry, Jones turns to the short story in which he unites the influence of the *Hen Benillion* with his modernist experimentation to create a style that is quite new. It owes as much to the fairytale as it does to high prose, and as much to sung poetry as it does to the more recent literary trends.

But to return briefly to the poetry before discussing these short stories; in the early published works answering studies in folk poetry are to be found flanking explosively modern and experimental works such as 'Sande' (*CP,* 7-8), 'Easter' (*CP* 8), 'Rant'(*CP,* 8) and 'Man' (*CP,* 9). In the poem 'Song' (*CP,* 11-2), an example of the *Canu Rhydd* (poetry that does not adhere to the strict rules of bardic *cynghanedd),* there is a sudden fusion of the two apparently antagonistic styles. A reference to medieval Welsh love messengers ('No love gulled me to bed') further confounds the amalgam. The form and metre belong to the folk tradition (ballad), the language is at once of this ilk ('I kept neat my virginity...I whistled up the mountain stones'), and yet gradually challenged by the sudden influence of surrealism ('I felt my woody hair pour out/like water from the head') and of Dylan Thomas, who acted as such a catalyst for the poetry of Glyn Jones ('My sucking star-dead child').

The poem thus shifts from an innocent beginning into something altogether more sinister and disturbing. The familiar four-line stanza that characterises the ballad, and the form Jones subsequently utilises to translate the *Hen Benillion,* mutates into six lines. The final two lines seem to bear little stylistic resemblance to the first four, a change that is only exacerbated by the accidental break in the two that is caused by the need to turn the page in the *Collected Poems* ('Lustrous, the Lord-star sprang to me, /he was my son instead'). It becomes clear that this poem belongs very much to Jones's short 'Dylan' period in which he struggles with the overpowering influence of his brilliant friend. It is of course significant that he uses the distinctions between traditional folk poetry and the violence of linguistic experimentalism that characterises modernism (particularly Thomas's own brand of it) to dramatise the impact of 'love' between two bodies. The 'Lord-Star' (Thomas or

Jones's own weakness for the temptations of 'Logopoeic dance') has seduced Jones away from the surety of the communal into those dangerous and wanton territories of the imagination. The implications of these two lines for Jones's own appropriation of Thomas's style cannot be overestimated. That the powerful 'Lord-star' becomes his 'son instead', that he re-births Thomas in his own language and his own work, that he somehow creatively kills and replaces him, is distinctly Freudian and Bloomian. That the 'sucking-star child [is] dead' at the poem's close is enigmatically referencing his own previous and innocent 'Virgin' poetic voice whose neatness and wholeness was casualty to the highly sexualised process of creative influence and collision that this poem symbolically re-enacts. Equally important, especially for this chapter, are the stylistic implications of 'Song' for much of his subsequent work. A poem that is so easily overlooked in the collection of Jones's work holds the blueprint for his characteristic fusion of folk and high poetry. It also reveals the essence of the ethical anxiety that leave him stranded between two antagonistic creative states and poetic forms.

At the same time that Jones's subsequent poetry features radical experimentation with the direct voices and unelaborated form of the *Hen Benillion,* it also finds him reacquainting himself with exactly that honesty, integrity and worldly certitude that initially seduced him. There is little to differentiate poems such as 'High Wind in the Village' (*CP,* 47), published in 1951, from the earlier poems considered above. It owes much to the verses that have clearly inspired it. Even the poem 'Returning' (*CP,* 46), gnomic in form, with a more complex psychological and narrative thread, retains the fierce imprint of the earlier genre. The attention to simple yet strikingly visual physical detail is evocative of the earlier verses ('The young man

at the stern with the yellow hair') and it is used by Jones to suggest an identity and a familiarity that it deliberately fails to explore. The man with the yellow hair is never more than the shadow he casts in the last line as he 'stands at my open door'. All the lack of historical and personal narrative context that the *Hen Benillion* bear as their particular legacy is mobilised by Jones to explore the analogous historical disconnection of modernity and more subtly the cultural disassociation of the 'Anglo-Welsh' in Wales. For the 'Anglo-Welsh', Modernism is not simply a general means of expressing dissatisfaction with history and the discourses it bequeathed, it also offers a convenient language with which to explore the culture's more immediate predicament. The cultural tool that Welsh history bequeathed in the form of the Welsh language is apparently inaccessible. Modernism thus offers Jones and his culturally disinherited Anglo-Welsh contemporaries the means of expressing their consequent sense of deracination.

It is particularly the apparent lack of language for psychological depth in the *Hen Benillion* that is converted by Jones into a Modernist instrument of foreboding, suggestive of a sinister psychological burden that remains profoundly and weightily unexpressed. The silenced history of which the *Hen Benillion* paradoxically seem to speak seems ominous when it is revisited and stylistically amplified by Jones. In his work, 'the text [seems to say] what it does not say' and the unwritten margins of the language are very busy locations. Poems appear poised on the cusp of some urgent revelation that is never given linguistic form ('I must speak before it leaves' [*CP*, 46]), and this urgency associated with the unspoken translates into both the social and the cultural context of the time. For Jones, the nameless voices of *y Gwerin* ventriloquise the comparable voiceless location of the Anglo-Welsh writers who bear the burden of

memories they can no longer access, experiences that arguably cannot be elucidated in the foreign tongue that has become their own.

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When one considers how the *Hen Benillion* so subtly inform and reform Jones's poetry, it is equally fascinating, if not more so, to address the impact of the Welsh folk poetry on his prose works. The strange, depersonalised and highly symbolic stories of the 1930's owe as much to the *Hen Benillion* as they do to earlier experimental modernist writers. As we have already seen, the emotional and descriptive spareness of the *Hen Benillion* appeals to Jones's own vision and version of Welsh modernity and it feeds subtly and insistently into his storytelling as much as it bleeds into his own poetry. In his fiction, the simplicity of the narrative, and the displaced resonances of the voices, evokes the pithy, anonymous and thus universalised voices of the *Hen Benillion.* It is just such an anonymity that Jones summons and makes expressive of modern exile and displacement in stories such as 'The Apple Tree'(*CS,* 91-98), 'The Kiss'(*CS,* 41-8), 'The Saviour'(*CS,* 99-109), and 'The Wanderer'(*CS,* 110-118). These strange tales, historically divorced to the extent that they approach the genres of parable, fable and myth, mobilise the anonymous voices of the *Hen Benillion,* transposing them into the twentieth century, and use them as vehicles for the kind of specifically 'Anglo-Welsh' Modernism already outlined above. This attempts to look beyond the Romantic era for inspiration not simply for the sake of literary integrity, but for the sake of national and cultural validity and validation. It is a Modernism that explores all the usual themes of historical and individual displacement, disorientation, disconnection and alienation but draws upon

the literary language of Wales when fashioning a discourse appropriate for their expression. The lack of historical context and individual authorship which is implicit in the *Hen Benillion* serves this voice of Welsh Modernism particularly well as Glyn Jones creates his bizarre and beautiful stories of a modern yet floundering Welsh people who are barely recognisable as the heirs of their past, and yet achingly familiar.

Superficial connections can be made directly between *Hen Benillion* and particular short stories. For example 'The Saviour' is eerily suggested by the first two lines of the stanza numbered 17 in Jones's book of translations

> Up the mountain an old mother
> Lived with a quiet captive daughter.[12]

Jones's own conflicted relationship with the Industrial Valleys (Home) and the Romantic and Romanticised natural world outside them is evoked in the following lines.

> No more will I leave Rhiwlas.
> My head spun like a compass.
> Falling I was badly hurt –
> Is my back dirty Thomas?[13]

The manner in which Jones's own head '[spins] like a compass' every time he senses he has strayed too far from where he perceives he should be, is the exact theme that drives the poem 'Merthyr' and of course the story 'I was born in the Ystrad Valley'. The same disorientation belongs to Trystan in the short story 'The Apple Tree' when he returns from the city, where he has journeyed from his remote home to sell his biblical bread and fish. His 'bitter' experiences colour the light that emerges from the kitchen, the 'anguish' of the city transforms the golden light into green, and this burns up the Apple tree 'in its icy fire' (*CS*, 93). The cost of straying too far from home, even when driven by necessity and survival, is severe and profoundly destructive: innocence and truth are at stake, home becomes 'unhomely' (*unheimlich*/ uncanny) and identity like a 'huge bone [is] broken'. The *Hen Benillion* include many a verse that warns of drifting too far from what is known and this nourishes Jones's own sense of guilty wandering from, and yet perplexingly within, his 'father's and his mother's country' (*HB*, 23).

'The Apple-tree' in particular is a story that truly engages with and reflects Jones own interpretation of the *Hen Benillion.* In fact the following stanza translated by Jones seems to lead like a précis momentously into the tale:

> Sun on mountain, wind at sea
> Tall grey rocks, but no green tree;
> Instead of men the grey gulls.
> God what keeps my heart from crying. (*HB*, 159)

Superficially it is the fact that there is 'no Green tree' that speaks most intensely to this story which ends in the apple tree being struck by lightning. However, the final line seems to epitomise the bare, impoverished mood of the entire tale. One wonders specifically why the small family persevere in the face of such terror and tragedy. Although the traditional community has shrunk in size to a heavily symbolic and alienated Modern family of three, the (over) simplicity of the experiences and emotions, 'loves, sorrows, enjoyments...of an entirely rural community, of a pre-industrial era' (*HB,* 15) are exactly those that Jones attributes to the *Hen Benillion.* Stranded in a modern world that merely displaces them, these uncomplicated people are in a state of ungoverned and incomprehensible conflict with the wider external world that enables their survival.[14] In their mere attempt to exist they are really experiencing as agonising and slow a death as that of Sibli's drowning lover (Trystan's sister is condemned to watch her lover drowning in the sea as he swims towards her). It is significant that when viewed so starkly against the imminence of a complex modernity the simplicity of the events and the emotions seem to have an even more edgy clarity. Sibli states, 'Trystan, my lover is dead'; and it voices the sound of skin fraying against the edges of experience as does the final line: 'Robyn's tree won't bear any more'.

The simple statements require no explication. They are exchanges of basic unelaborated information and trauma is contained by them exactly because they are so spare. There is no reaching or stumbling for an adequate language to give expression to the associated emotion and because of this, for the modern reader used to textual absences and silences, they somehow 'mean' much more profoundly. These quiet and spare spaces in the text are now recognisably tender means of enunciating

trauma, but for Jones in the 1930's and 40's, it is a language that is startlingly new. The naiveté of the *Hen Benillion* is clearly shadowing this strange story and informing what is left unwritten as much as the text itself (a connection between verse and fiction that is reinforced by the fact that Jones's own derivative folk poems are incorporated in the text.[CS, 92]). The silences and the abrupt spaces between the words where reality and language is claimed by the unknown and unnamed become precipices in Jones work. These emotional edges are handled with a practical yet anaesthetized thoroughness. The accidental fragmentary nature of the *Hen Benillion,* the anonymity of the voices and their combination of simplicity and startling accuracy, is thus mobilised by Jones as a vehicle for experimentalism.

When I refer to this kind of anaesthetized emotional accuracy, I am thinking particularly of verses such as the following two translations, where the sentimentalism of Romanticism has little role, the emotional experience of the 'I' is motivational but not anatomised, and the vast possibilities of metaphor to approach the apparently unapproachable emotional experience are un-required and unrequited, as tropes are inhibitors of emotional fact.

Tonight I'll not climb up that stair.
The one I worshipped is not there.
I'll lie instead on her cold stone
And let my heart break there alone.

So that my heart you might see
chained in its sad captivity
I have often wished my lass
My heart were made of clear glass.

(*HB*, 43)

No trope could more adequately express the sense of loss conveyed by the last two lines of the first verse. This physical dramatisation of loss is equally as meaningful as any more complex construct of language would be. The second example is a beautifully unfolded trope, and has not the power of the former, yet still retains the emotional precision that Jones seizes upon in the *Hen Benillion* and that distinguishes them from other contemporary Welsh language poetry.

Paradoxically it is exactly the devotion to unsophisticated simplicity that made such folk poetry attractive to the Romantic Movement in the eighteenth century. Folk poetry was assumed to be the naked transcription of straightforward uncorrupted truth and this meant its unadorned language seemed to bring the listener or reader wistfully close to the ideal of historical innocence that the contemporary European experience seemed to destroy. So ironically, whilst Jones attempts to distance himself from the Romanticism, that signifies the alien English literary history, he is in fact heavily indebted to precisely the influence he would like to sideline. In effect, Jones tries to distance himself from his own susceptibility to the English literary tradition by utilising exactly the same Romantic mechanism in a Welsh context. He demonstrates his suspicion of the Anglicised influences that have shaped him, by rehearsing them again in his love of the Welsh *Hen Benillion.* The language may be Welsh, but the process of literary and cultural reclamation originates from outside the Welsh tradition. The impossible psychological complexity of Jones's cultural predicament results in him unconsciously creating pursuant shadows out of those he consciously desires to distance himself from. He too seeks a forgotten, almost lost, poetic language to redeem him from the political and social complexities of his present exile. By translating and promoting the *Hen Benillion* Jones is in fact, and against his

will, vicariously writing himself and the 'Anglo-Welsh' into that same history of Anglicised literary endeavour, and yet he would fain be writing himself into that of the Welsh-language tradition.

When Trystan, in the story, describes his journey to the city, one can see exactly how the language of the *Hen Benillion* is deployed as a tool for Modernist displacement.

> 'I went upwards towards the city,' he told her. 'The trees moved round me, each standing in a separate pool of shadow. The thrush was heavy in the hedge. The blackbird hurried along the horizon. The poplar made a fuss and the little hawthorn was heavy with the milks of her bloom (CS, 95)

Trystan situates himself strangely and surreally in the world as he speaks of going 'Upwards towards the city'. As though he is a pilgrim, the symbolism flirts with the rhetoric of medieval allegory. The abstraction is sustained as he locates his journey in the natural world which is at once familiar and yet strange: The trees and the birds seem to ventriloquise his anxiety. Resisting his presence, they are burdened, preoccupied and solitary. The natural setting, once the anchor for reality, and the bounds of security, is suddenly become sinister and disturbing. Trystan, an unwilling visionary, like Tiresias, is condemned to see 'the incurable disease called life' (*CS*, 95). The economy of the observations is symbolic not of innocence but of unexpressed and unmanageable experience. In 'The Apple-Tree' Jones reveals how the language of the *Hen Benillion* is broken by the Modern world, and how this very linguistic insufficiency can be the most accurate way of expressing the experience of

a Modern Wales that is still caught precariously between Romanticism and Modernity. A language which was once adequate for its cultural task is revealed to be stretched far too tautly and sparely over the vastness of unlabelled experience. The result is a naiveté that has become menacingly insufficient as a response to modern experience, and a language that is gradually forced towards increasing linguistic and metaphoric complexity and sophistication.

In 'The Dream of Jake Hopkins' Jones writes: 'I cannot penetrate this shell, my glance/Shatters on the tough plate armour of appearance' (*CP*, 29). He refers to his own state of tedium impeding any vital relationship with the external world however such incarceration in self is equally vital in the earlier short story. It is such an impenetrability that is highlighted in so many of Jones's early short stories and that he either derives from the *Hen Benillion* or perceives within them. The inability to penetrate the appearance of the world is exactly the modern condition in which his characters flounder. The narrative constantly creates boundaries out of simple description. Everyday actions somehow become the barrier to accessing the obviously cavernous psychology that looms beyond them in silence ('she watched Trystan take a fish out of the sea'). What is such a familiar action it should be inconsequential is become symbolic of a survival that is suddenly and unexpectedly turned into a matter of urgency. As much as this expresses the modern experience of wartime emergency and insecurity it also expresses the urgency that is entirely specific to Wales. Even physical description, so seemingly unimportant that it can easily be overlooked, is of vital and yet oblique significance. It seems superfluous that 'Trystan wore tall boots and a black jersey' and yet it is strangely vital, because in the opening pages it is the only language between these characters and their absolute silence. The physicality of

their appearances and their related experiences must compensate for their lack of direction, psychological description and contextual history, else they would have no substance at all. They exist in the present, in a basic descriptive manner, and it is that which must suffice: it is survival. Such description draws the reader close, and yet repels him/her with its lack of specificity. The particular is lost in the rhythms of the archetype: it could be any man in long boots and a black jersey, just as it could be any girl in 'a bright blue dress, sleeveless'. We feel we know the characters because the descriptions appear so precise and visually significant, and yet all that is presented is a strange kind of blinding archetype, the same kind that was the currency of *The Mabinogion* centuries before. At once what seems so familiar is in fact utterly strange and distant, 'impenetrable'. In 'The Apple Tree' so clearly drawn is the 'sharp sun' that all is obscured by the very light that enables the creation of such a microscopic and faceted world. What is present is not as solid as the light would suggest. Robyn, Sibli and Trystan have such powerful visual and emotional imprints, and yet they remain ciphers, silent as if silenced by the burden of their existence.

It is this paradoxical knowing and not knowing that Jones inherits from the writers of the *Hen Benillion.* They are present and yet un-present in the modern world. As much as they speak they also withhold. What is known about the *Hen Benillion* and their authors will always be shadowed by what is not known. The voices are always accompanied by a displaced silence that seems to scream louder than their speech. It is this that Jones borrows from the anonymous creators of the *Hen Benillion* and it is this that he recreates and explores within the context of modernity. At once a powerful physical presence, the three children of a broken Eden are essentially voiceless and powerless. When they do speak it is in the riddling

tongues of a language that is outdated, one that arguably has more in common with the *Hen Benillion.* Sibli refers to Robyn as the 'little boy with the bird's name' (*CS,* 92) and they exchange verses rather than everyday platitudes. It is interesting that they are described so relentlessly by the narrator, contained so completely by the minute physical description that they are imprisoned by it as much as they are by their own suffering. That their tongues only find a happy and adequate expression in poetry is interesting, as though they really are the displaced children of the *Hen Benillion* stranded in modernity with a language that is mismatched. They certainly only seem to find a happy or sufficient expression in verse. When they permit their pain to find form in prose it is protracted, without respite and without consolation. This myth of Modern life is informed so fundamentally by the voices of the *Hen Benillion* that it is difficult to conceive Jones's idea of modernity without their constant haemorrhage into his work. Sibli, Robyn and Trystan are the idealised people of the lost Eden cast defenceless and unsophisticated upon a world they do not fit. Their poetry belongs to a simpler world ('Clouds go grey for snow or sleet / The gulls are blown about our street...' [*CS,* 92]), and their later prose is forged as, in their innocence, they are cast against a complex and grotesque world.

The inability to 'penetrate' is also a convenient metaphor for the position of the Welsh writer who has 'lost' his Welsh tongue: the lapse of language necessarily locates him on the periphery looking in at the world but not being of it. Aside from the sense of exile that is suggested by the strangely repellent nature of the external world, in Jones work there are numerous instances of characters gazing from the outside in, frequently through windows into houses. There are visitors with no fixed abode, passing through, or merely wandering without roots. Additionally, there are

many instances of eyes being unable to penetrate what they perceive, and countless objects that shine so brightly that they reflect any searching gaze and refuse to yield to questioning. The most powerful of all metaphors of this kind is perhaps the exile of the buried miner ('dreaming of acceptance' [CS, 44]) in 'The Kiss', as he attempts with 'two broken hands to push the pitch night back into the stones' (CS, 41). Countering this sense of alienation, one to which death has condemned him absolutely, in 'The Dream of Jake Hopkins' (*CP,* 23-39), there is a 'voice of blessed memory' which replies that the 'penetration' (a fascinating word choice when translated into the cultural complexities of Wales, suggesting sex, entry, even rape), the entrance, the understanding, that Jake desires, and yet cannot perceive, is already his. It resides in his own mislaid memories: specifically those of his Grandmother. These memories bear such a striking resemblance to the descriptions of Trystan's Grandmother in *The Valley, the City, the Village*, that the uneasy relationship between English and Welsh-speaking Wales, and the related significance of 'memory' that is stranded conspicuously between the two, are inevitably evoked. Thus Jones explores the cultural predicament of Wales through the Modernist notion of alienation and exile, claiming the trope for Wales in a particularly innovative way. This ensures that his Welsh Modernism will always be distinctive.

'The Wanderer' (*CP,* 110-8) is perhaps the most obvious incarnation of this type of Welsh Modernism, which mobilises the notion of exile and displacement to serve as expression for a particularly Welsh predicament. It combines Modernist notions of exile and displacement with *hiraeth* to create a story in which a personal love affair of the kind related in the *Hen Benillion* below is recoded as a cultural love affair.

Across the sea my true heart lies

Across the sea I send my sighs

Across the sea there lives my darling

In my thoughts each night and morning. (*HB*, 159)

The distance that is implied in this verse by the barrier of the measureless sea is developed by Jones into a more abstract yearning for a psychological idea of home that is particular to his own mapping of the cultural divide in Wales. This particular verse seems to provide a framework for the trope of cultural loss that haunts Jones's work. When Sibli describes the death of her lover, she refers to the fragments of a broken bridge that span the stretch of water he swims in. This suggests that the possibility of a safe crossing has somehow been destroyed, and that a gulf of water lies between her and her love, her hope. A similar stretch of water is mobilised in 'The Wanderer' to lend expression to the gulf that lies between the lost suffering exile and his home, his father.

That Jones fixes upon this particular form of *hiraeth* to express the impact of the divisions in Wales is interesting. What is especially pertinent is how he transforms close proximities into distances as unfathomable as the sea. He mobilises the estuaries of the south Carmarthen Coast with which he is so familiar, those that link Llansteffan with Ferryside and Laugharne, and translates the obstacle of the sea into an enormous psychological no-man's land that must be traversed to ensure security. He exploits the fact that very real places can seem so visually close yet are in fact not the proximities they appear to be. Real distance is disrupted and made distant and

inaccessible by the intervening sea. The sea thus takes on all the psychological symbolism of the distance and yet proximity that Jones perceives between the two languages of Wales. The narrow estuaries allow a perceived intimacy that is confounded by the difficulty of traversing the intervening sea. For Jones the cultural challenge of translating the *Hen Benillion* is implicated in this very trope as the verses become the rickety bridge that attempts to span the colossal complexity and unpredictably shifting currents of that psychological sea that ebbs and flows constantly between the two languages of Wales. Jones translates the *Hen Benillion* because he is exiled from the idea of someone/thing that he loves and to whom/ which he wishes to return.

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The *Hen Benillion* of course were the product of an oral tradition and this accounts for their brief, possibly broken, legacy and the silences that have been considered above. The tenacity of the oral tradition in Wales was significant for the poetry of the emerging Anglo-Welsh period and continued to be so as the movement became more secure in its identity. Oral characteristics were startlingly evident in work by writers such as Glyn Jones, Idris Davies and even that 'Englishman' Dylan Thomas. Whilst other European and English-language Modernisms diverged from the traditional forms and styles that were such servants of the mnemonics required by oral cultures, Anglo-Welsh writers were less revolutionary and forged their own distinct and equally innovative modernisms whilst still retaining the shapes and sounds of more traditional verses. Their originality and their failures reside in the way they recreate and subvert these oral traditions whilst retaining their integrity. The oral

culture in Wales vitally fashioned the emergent Anglo-Welsh voices and this is important when Modernism is considered to be the product of highly literate cultures that were lamenting the loss of and/or self-consciously break with past traditions.

Even the Modernist fascination with the 'primitive' cultures is indicative of a literate society looking back to a pre-developed state. Wales being both 'primitive' and literate, possessing two living cultures, one ancient and one so modern it is only just beginning to define itself, is situated rather incongruously on the border between the two and thus bears a unique relationship to the dilemma that troubled the Modernist period. The Anglo-Welsh in particular know what it is to live the fragmentation that Eliot writes of so academically and impersonally in *The Waste Land.* To be divorced from one's past, to view heritage and tradition only in broken pieces, in shards, is the very immediate predicament that writers contemporary with Glyn Jones faced. 'These fragments I have shored against my ruin'[15] are lines which become very sinister when translated into the landscape of Welsh culture and politics of the 1920's and 1930's onward. Every foray into the Welsh language literature that Jones makes, every crossing of the internal border that he attempts in his work, exemplifies Eliot's earlier words. Jones finds, collects and 'shores' the disparate collection of fragments that he has borrowed from the ancient voices of Wales to prevent his own 'ruin'. For ruin in Wales throughout the first half of the twentieth century, as it was for the early modernists, is to have no memory of, or connection with, what came before.

Startlingly innovative, deconstructive and visually textual, Modernism sought to break down all those structures which also happened to aid the mnemonics of

orality. In Modernism, narratives fracture into non-linear temporalities in which the reader is deliberately displaced, alienated from the familiar rhyming and rhythmic patterns. The ancient tools of metrics and rhyme give way to language that is far more explosive, unpredictable and essentially non-mnemonic. Meaning, which is required to be solid and reliable for an oral culture desirous of retaining memory, history and a sense of continuity, diversifies under the fingers of the Modernist writers who can afford to be decadent in their use of language, asocial in their outlook and anarchic in meaning. For the text redeems the writer: he is no longer a tool of history but a creator of the present moment, and as such, an innovator. What makes Welsh Modernism disconnected from the absolute literacy of the movement in general is that Wales is either a nation closer to its oral roots, or that Wales is a nation that culturally requires its oral roots be (re)invigorated at a time which paradoxically coincides with a divergent European trend. That even in English-speaking Wales, the oral tradition should still assert itself alongside and within Modernism is peculiar to the Welsh tradition and a significant indicator that (Anglo-) Welsh Modernism is a phenomenon apart.

Even Dylan Thomas, the most experimental of voices, is conscious of language as 'sound', of alliteration, assonance, and rhythms that stimulate the process of memory. His rigorous forms set him apart from most of his contemporaries and precursors. Linguistic formulae deceptively recur throughout his poetry: deceptively, because although certain metaphors are relentlessly repeated and reused, their meaning is never constant, and shifts from context to context, even between each reading. Despite the repetition of signs, meaning is vagrant, never fixed, and never certain. Thomas arguably utilises these traits of orality to undermine the familiarity

and stability of meaning that they were once purposely used to retain. Subversively oral, Thomas may hoax the reader into innocent recollection, but what they recite is far from innocent. Lulling the reader into a false sense of ritual and reverence, Thomas destabilizes everything taken for granted without any grand rebellion. His placating form, his rhythm and his rhyme mean that we can recite the most dissident views in the comfort of a tempo and a vocabulary that conveys nothing that is revolutionary. It is a tactic utilised by many folk songwriters today, where soothing and familiar cadences are utilised as vehicles for challenge and change, and innocently all are drawn to sing along because we recognise, or at least can predict, the tune, until later, we address the meaning of the signs that fit so easily together, and find that the notes we have been singing are vehicles for insurgency and we are party to that.

However, despite this gaming, his poetry notoriously achieves an alternative artistic existence when read aloud. The radio play *Under Milk Wood* is an experiment in modern orality. In fact one can read the radio play as an unconscious compromise between Modernism and the more traditional Oral genres, a form that is peculiarly resilient in Wales. In this second concluding section, I would like to suggest that Glyn Jones achieves subversions comparable to his friend Dylan Thomas, but these are either more deeply embedded and disguised, or less studied, and are therefore liable to pass unnoticed except by those with ready access to the Welsh-language literature with which Jones is (un)consciously in discreet dialogue. One could argue that Thomas's success was his apparent lack of cultural specificity and Jones's limitation was that he failed to be culturally universal (that and the fact that Thomas was clearly the superior poet).

As a postscript to the first sections of this chapter, I would like to suggest that Glyn Jones's own contribution to the radio play/poem form, that Thomas made so famous in Wales, is one that again owes much to his study, revision and translation of the *Hen Benillion.* 'The Dream of Jake Hopkins' is a poem that betrays the anxiety of modernity at the same time as it mobilises the irony of Post-modernity, and it is in the spirit of the latter that Jones utilises the rhythms and language of both English folk poetry and the *Hen Benillion* to express the monotony and futility of Jake's situation and the nullity of his subsequent sense of identity. In this poem the influence of the English and the Welsh folk traditions merge without the anxiety or the urgency that accompanied his earlier fusions of folk poetry. The *Hen Benillion* sit more comfortably with their English equivalent. It would seem that as the pressures and anxieties of Modernity ceased and yielded to the plurality of the post-modern world Jones's strange dual cultured language somehow found a more guiltless discharge. Irony is far more suited to duality and hybridity than it is to the undiluted anxiety of Modernism. In addition, as the early 'Anglo-Welsh' movement became more secure in its own longevity, and an accepted, if contested, voice of Wales, Jones was liberated somewhat from the initial anxieties of integrity and the associated need to create and justify his audience, (although, as I state elsewhere, he was never fully clear of their shadow).

That Jones draws on English influences to give expression to ineffectuality and tedium is interesting. He utilizes recognizable clichéd rhyme schemes and doggerel that are particularly effective orally. In written texts, these are usually the preferred vehicles of habit and non-meaning in mid twentieth-century English verse. Oral rhyming schemes, associated with a less inventive creativity, are satirically

charged with references to life's predictability and outrageous monotony. Betjeman and Larkin deploy familiar empty ciphers in pithy rhyme schemes to give expression to the collapse of Englishness as the Empire crumbles.

> Here I stand a middle aged master,
> My hair like tow and my face like plaster,
> Awaiting my class – awaiting disaster. (*CP,* 23)

Of course in the 1950's these conscious, comic and vaudevillian clichés are deliberate, ironic references to pre-experimental forms. In the notes to the poem Jones affirms that the strict rhythmic and metrical scheme adopted in much of the poem is required 'as radio poetry [...] has often sounded boneless and shapeless' (*CP,* 144). It is no coincidence that as literature developed for a reading rather than a listening audience such devices became increasingly scorned. The cliché or the formulaic expression is the enemy of innovation and the latter even in the twenty-first century is the yard-stick by which literature is measured and judged. However, in 'The Dream of Jake Hopkins' Glyn Jones manages to accommodate both the ancient legacy of popular orality and the innovativeness nurtured by the twentieth century, in a manner that is truly post-modern. The radio poem manifests traditional folk elements in which the resonances of the *Hen Benillion* can be discerned. However, it is not simply the folk poetry that is quarried for inspiration. The form and the tone of the three-lined rhyming stanzas which open Part I do more than recall the gnomic poetry of writers such as Llywarch Hen in the tenth century Welsh Saga Poetry. The prevailing mood of suffering and the tragic struggling against the fate of life that is recounted by a single unfulfilled voice is particularly reminiscent of Llywarch Hen's lament, and it

is a mood which is also prevalent in Jones's last poem *Seven Keys to Shaderdom*. At the same time that these flirtations with older voices are woven into the poem, the language, metaphor and image are distinctly modern: Jake's face is 'like plaster' (*CP*, 27); the register is where 'crimson rain rages' (*CP*, 27); and the headmaster has 'a fanged grin off the roof of Notre Dame' (*CP*, 24). The modern nestles alongside the colloquial ('Dai is a Dai-cap who always lies Doggo' [*CP*, 25]) and the alliteration and assonance fuse to become characteristic of both Modernity and the mnemonic tools of the oral tradition. This is a truly hybrid piece happily collecting and collating pieces of all available traditions and cultures to create the mind and memories of Jake. All is contained in the relentless rhythm and rhyming scheme which compounds the overall tone of Part I, which can be encapsulated by the Beckettian existentialism of the following passage:

> Boredom Inspector, like Measles, I hate.
> But measles are destiny, boredom man's fate. (*CP*, 27)

Despite, and because of, the rigorous and ordered manner in which Jake relays his daily existence, it has no vital meaning, the severe metrics have acted to stem the sense of spontaneity and are utilised to express the rigidity of life's monotony and mechanistic nature.

It is in part II where the voices shift from the exterior world to the interior that this rhythm and rhyme begins to collapse as the uncertainty of the isolated mind is visited by birds of memory, and a more organic traditional form of oral expression bleeds through. What follows is freer in form, a conversation between three

internalised voices: two diametrically opposed and one which seems to emerge as an unbidden bridge between the two. The 'Voice of Blessed Memory' is that of childhood, innocence and idealism and, rather like the pairing of Blake's *Songs of Innocence and Experience*, is countered by the 'Voice of Undesired Memory', which expounds the realities of suffering and pain that inevitably corresponds. What emerges in the space between these two opposed voices is the 'Voice of Memory's Variance'. 'Wisdom is remembering' states Shader Twm towards the final lines of *Seven keys to Shaderdom* (*CP,* 130): it is this wisdom that is expressed in the *Hen Benillion* and that takes a traditional mythic form in the 'Voice of Memory's Variance'. Naïve and childlike in its uncompromising truth, the wisdom that is gathered between happiness and suffering, between innocence and experience, manifests itself in the ambivalence of this voice.

Poised somewhere between the blessed and the undesired, memory's variance expresses the riddling and strange truths of 'wise lore'. For example 'Jake's Granny said that he should never play with the Pagans in the wood' (*CP,* 31). The moral warning at the heart is so pertinent to Wales: being seduced from duty and home, specifically away from the morality that is so frequently represented by Jones through the archetypical Welsh *Nain* (Grandmother). This strange shifting voice that undermines the binary opposition of the other two voices with its lessons and lore bears most relation to the *Hen Benillion* that are grouped in Jones's translation under the two headings of Experience and Wisdom. It is not always a palatable wisdom but invariably accurate and universalised into a kind of archetypical nursery rhyme; a moral code. The dying cry that closes the short ditty is that profound, and often unbidden, lament of the guilty prodigal Welsh son I have discussed elsewhere in the thesis: 'Nain, oh, Take me back take me back, take me take me back....'(*CP*, 31).

At the same time as owing much to the insight of *Penillion* such as number 260 ('I am a girl on the brink…I'll tread the flat lands after all.' [*HB*, 133]), there is an obvious appropriation of the Romantic tradition in the utilisation of the pagan/gipsy/bohemian figure of the Countess with her tambourine as trope for the seductive temptations of otherness. This is an otherness which for Jones can be conceived of as the very Anglicization he both embraces and resists as he attempts to manage the subconscious struggle for identity in his Wales. The next utterance that surfaces from this profound and enigmatic voice is a subversion of an English nursery rhyme.

> Jake was a man of double deed
> Who sowed his garden full of weed;
> And when the weed began to grow
> Jake had a heart as heavy as snow;
> And when the snow began to fall
> It sat like Death upon Jake's wall;
> And when all the walls began to crack
> Dread was a rod upon Jake's back;
> And when his back began to smart
> Despair put a penknife in his heart;
> And when Jake's heart began to bleed
> Then he'll be dead and dead indeed. (*CP*, 33)

A man of words and not of deeds

Is like a garden full of weeds

And when the weeds begin to grow

It's like a garden full of snow

And when the snow begins to fall

It's like a bird upon the wall

And when the bird away does fly

It's like an eagle in the sky

And when the sky begins to roar

It's like a lion at the door

And when the door begins to crack

It's like a stick across your back

And when your back begins to smart

It's like a penknife in your heart

And when your heart begins to bleed

You're dead, and dead, and dead indeed.[16]

Jones takes a universal nursery rhyme about 'a man', personalises the language, and internalises the dynamic of cause and effect to suggest a process of self destruction. The rather sinister nature of the original nursery rhyme is not lost in Jones's poem. Of Puritan origin, this nursery rhyme is claimed to be a satire directed at the inconsistency and unreliability of Charles II. The question of course is why should Jones choose to appropriate and rewrite it? The first lines are utterly different and yet via our understanding of Wales at the time subtly and strongly related. 'Double deeds' are inevitably meaningful in a nation that has two languages, and for a people

who are thus caught between two codes of speech and action. The idea that the double deed is somehow duplicitous, incriminating and self-defeating ('who sowed his garden full of weed') is interesting and perhaps illuminated mostly by the corresponding words of the original verse – 'A man of words and not of deeds / is like a garden full of weeds'. In fact, these words recall the beginning of this consideration of the *Hen Benillion,* and expose the same guilty concern of the poet who fails in his duty to the people. The culpability of the teacher is that of the poet. Jake's profound concern that he has been double dealing is related by association to the fact that he is a man of 'words and not of deeds'. His empty words that convey such monotony create a figure who is, because of his cynicism, as inconstant, unreliable and selfish a purveyor of suffering as any dealer in insubstantial dreams and fancy. That he has, like Charles II, betrayed the people (children) he represents (teaches) through being inconstant, and driven by ever expanding delusion, is not strictly true, rather the opposite for Jake who has not permitted his thoughts to fly. The one moral of fanciful restraint so familiar in Jones's other poetry is re-forged in the fire of its antithesis. The silhouette of Jones's own poetic guilt can be read in this odd requisitioning of and variation on an obscure English nursery rhyme. The 'garden full of weeds' is as much a neglected audience as it is a neglected classroom.

The notion that the deadness of Jake's existence can be alleviated by memory is of course loaded in Wales for an English language writer. Jones's love of the *Hen Benillion* and longstanding attempt to translate them are themselves eloquent instances of his personal need, as 'Anglo-Welsh' writer, to recover cultural memory. The need to remember what is culturally lost haunts Jones work. The supposition that an existence can be liberated by 'voices of memory' is significant, as is the concept

that a way of life can be questioned and /or altered by the intervention and readdressing of the past. The final and anguished verses spoken by the Voice of Memory's Variance cry out for the 'key of the keys of the kingdom'. The desire to gain entrance to some understanding that is out of reach is of course for Jones the Christian a defining symptom of the human condition itself. However, in the shadows of the religious rubric lurks the cultural dilemma of his time and the phrase the 'key of the keys' thus applies equally to the ideal Kingdom of Wales he acutely feels he is removed from by virtue of the language he is condemned to use. His repeated, obsessive, recourse to the *Hen Benillion* was, therefore, as this chapter has attempted to demonstrate, his attempt as Anglo-Welsh writer to find that key, to unlock the past, and to access the culture that had been so long denied him.

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[1]Islwyn Jenkins, ed. 'Come Down', *The Collected Poems of Idris Davies* (Llandysul: Gomer, 2003) 24.
[2] 'A Man of Words and not of Deeds', *Nursery Rhyme Lyrics, Origins and History* http://www.rhymes.org.uk/a4-a-man-of-words.htm.
[3] Tony Conran, 'The *Hen Benillion* and Glyn Jones's, *New Welsh Review* No. 41 (Summer 1998) 34-36.
[4] Ibid. 36.
[5] M. Wynn Thomas, 'Hidden Attachments', *Corresponding Cultures* (Cardiff: UWP, 1999) 63.
[6] Tony Brown writes that Jones was liberated by the fact that Thomas was not 'bound by decorums of register and of English Literary practice' and that he found 'an echo of his own fascination with the novelty of English words and confirmation of the startling effects that could be achieved when incongruous words flashed together in unexpected and unconventional ways' (*CS,* xxxiv).
[7] Laura Wainwright, "'The huge upright Europe-reflecting mirror': The European Dimension in the Early Short Stories and Poems of Glyn Jones", *Almanac: Yearbook of Welsh Writing in English* 12 (2007-8) 55-88.
[8] Op. cit. The section of this chapter concerning Harri Webb and his construction of an 'Anglo-Welsh community out if the rubble of the smashed, neglected , self-neglected..south Wales' (55) is especially revealing as a measure of the 'people's poet' (the *Bardd* that gave himself to the *Gwerin)* that Jones so often aspired to be.
[9] 'This *cynghanedd*-less poetry was not thought worthy of being written down and preserved, and it survived, if it survived at all, not by means of ink and vellum, but on the tongues of the people.' (*HB,* 10).
[10] Dylan Thomas, 'The Orchards', *Collected Stories* (London: Everyman, 1984, 1993) 42-9.
[11] Glyn Jones follows much the same pattern when he considers his own autobiography in *The Dragon Has Two Tongues.* His birth place holds the proof of his Welsh-ness – his identity.
[12] Glyn Jones, *A Peoples Poetry: Hen Benillion* (Bridgend: Seren, 1997) 29.
[13] Ibid. 145.
[14] An interesting, and utterly divergent, reading of this dynamic would be to perceive in this family of three and the symbolic apple tree the fragile idea of Wales, struggling against the imminence of obscurity and silence against the wider anglicised world, but this in some ways counters my own thesis! Or maybe not, for the idea of fragility is one that both the Welsh language literature and the 'Anglo-Welsh' literature of the time have absolutely in common. Both are poised on the cusp of silence.
[15] T.S.Eliot, 'The Wasteland', *Collected Poems 1909-1962* (London: Faber and Faber, 1963) 79.

[16] 'A Man of Words and not of Deeds', *Nursery Rhyme lyrics, origins and history*, http://www.rhymes.org.uk/a4-a-man-of-words.htm.

After word

Glyn Jones's short story 'The Kiss' creates the bizarre world of two brothers and a mother. One brother is buried deeply beneath the earth, ambiguously dead yet vitally alive. He fights his way from his dark earthy grave and begins his equally dark shadowy journey home to his family. There, he finds his brother suffering with one hand hopelessly mutilated and useless. In a manner that is both ceremonial and ritualistic,[1] he slowly unfolds the bandages and kisses the petrified flesh, an action that notably, and incomprehensively, appals the mother who watches. This act of forgiveness and union is so profoundly moving and symbolic, to the point of being sacrosanct, that the text fails on many levels to account for its own intensity. Perhaps it is an example of Jones's powerful response to Symbolism? Maybe, certainly, but I would rather see that Symbolism as servant and subtle vehicle for a far more political kind of mythologizing.

Transposing this story into the culturally divided Wales from, and into which, it emerged, the apparent innocence of the metaphor is immediately claimed by one particular subtext. The two dominant ideas of Wales are personified and unified by the two brothers. One brother is a palpable ghost – dead man (and language?) walking – and the other is an invalid incapacitated by a peripheral wound that will not heal and festers filthily beneath bandages. One brother is caught in a determined act of forgiveness and an expression of unconditional love almost beyond our understanding. The other brother humbly accepts it. It is an act of such exquisite introspection, so reflective and absorbed, that its concentrated process displaces the reader to the role of remote 'voyeur'. Once culturally contextualised, the one

wounded hand becomes a specifically 'Anglo-Welsh' disability where all actions are implicitly half completed, a 'cultural wound' that seems to prefigure that proffered by Bobi Jones,[2] and one that has been considered many times over (on a sliding scale of deformity: graze, scar, canker and cancer) as disfigurement of the Welsh anatomy.

However, the ideal unifying scenario that Jones creates in this abstract story depends upon the acceptance of an implicit binary hierarchy that places the Welsh language and its discourse in a privileged position. It is the redeemer, the bringer of forgiveness, whilst the suffering and deformed 'Anglo-Welsh' brother is somehow culpable for his own wound and must be willing recipient of the kiss: a small beautiful mercy that has such sublime significance. As this thesis hopes to have demonstrated it is not a hierarchy that Jones so easily surrenders to in his other creative works. Rather it is an ideal, a distilled prose that silences the proliferating anxieties and antagonisms of Jones towards his 'Wales' in one mighty extraction. 'The Kiss' is for Jones, as it was for Klimt,[3] a gilded icon: utterly and biblically, idealistic, if not miraculous.

It is at the location of this trope that the thesis was introduced. With a shadow, a fleshful ghost, with exile and return, forgiveness and forgetting and with wounds that may be buried, but fester grotesquely beneath the facade of texts. It began with and ends with Jones's alternatively willing and reluctant representations of the impossibly divided Wales: the shadow, the struggle and the guilt as it is mediated through his own creative wrangling with figures that confound and challenge his ideas of Welsh identity. A far more revealing instance of Jones's tendency to present voices that internally diverge, and yet impossibly collide, is to be found in a much earlier poem,

'Selves' (*CP*, 200). There, Jones writes the following lines as he explores a more psychologically wanton voice ('wanton' in the sense that it desires to uncover itself) than those he proffers later. This is a voice that seeks to understand a duality that thwarts and distorts its coherent self, and yet does not fully comprehend or anticipate the extent of its complexity.

> And now within the I-womb, two lives lust
> And wrangle endlessly; not the sharp
> Contentions of the body with the soul,
> That flesh and spirit, Jacob-Esau strife,
> But ghost and mind disputing troubles me. (*CP*, 200)

Yet, with its divided minds in strife, colliding lusts, minds haunted by, and creating their own, ghosts, the endless wrangling of the i-womb, this passage seems visionary in its ability to foretell the trouble that a divided Wales will continue to cause in Jones's agile and shifting imagination throughout his life. Isolating the final words 'lust', 'sharp' 'soul' 'strife' and 'me', allows us to identify a kind of code that liberates much of the bitter conflict that subtly informs all of Jones's work, and that is the vital concern of this thesis. The poem also summarises the preference for English Romanticism as vehicle for this struggle and anxiety. However, it is not simply Romanticism and its English ambush of Anglo-Welsh voices that has been surveyed here. Jones's struggles with shadows, his creative and cultural guilt are to be found in his, frequently oblique, acknowledgement and repression of many conflicting influences. Not the least of these is the difficult relationship with the Welsh-language

cultural 'establishment' that is mediated through the sub-texts and shadows of most of his work. In *The Wasteland* Tiresias 'sees all' only in the 'violet hour',[4] in the margins between light and dark. One could postulate that an equivalent 'violet' lens is required to see clearly the intricate web of internal conflict in Jones work.

In truth, it is not 'the kiss' that would be a cure, but the earlier, naïve, and creatively derivative verse of 'endless wrangling' that condenses not only the dilemma of Glyn Jones himself, but that of the transitional generation of Anglo-Welsh writers of which he (like his friend Dylan Thomas) was such a peculiarly revealing member.

[1] For an excellent reading of this story that unfolds the religious overtones of this story, see Tony Brown, "'Praise...in my pain and in my enjoying': Self and Community in the Short stories of Glyn Jones", *Fire Green as Grass,* ed. Belinda Humphrey (Llandysul: Gomer, 1995) 65-81.
[2] Bobi Jones, 'Anglo-Welsh: More Definition', *Planet* 16 (February/March 1973) 11-23, 12. Jones states that 'Anglo-Welshness' 'is a perversion of normality, it is a grunt or a cry or an odour rising from a cultural wound of a special kind'.
[3] Reference to the painting by the well known Expressionist artist Gustave Klimt, 'The Kiss'
[4] T.S.Eliot, 'The Wasteland', *Collected Poetry 1909-62* (London: Faber, 1963).

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